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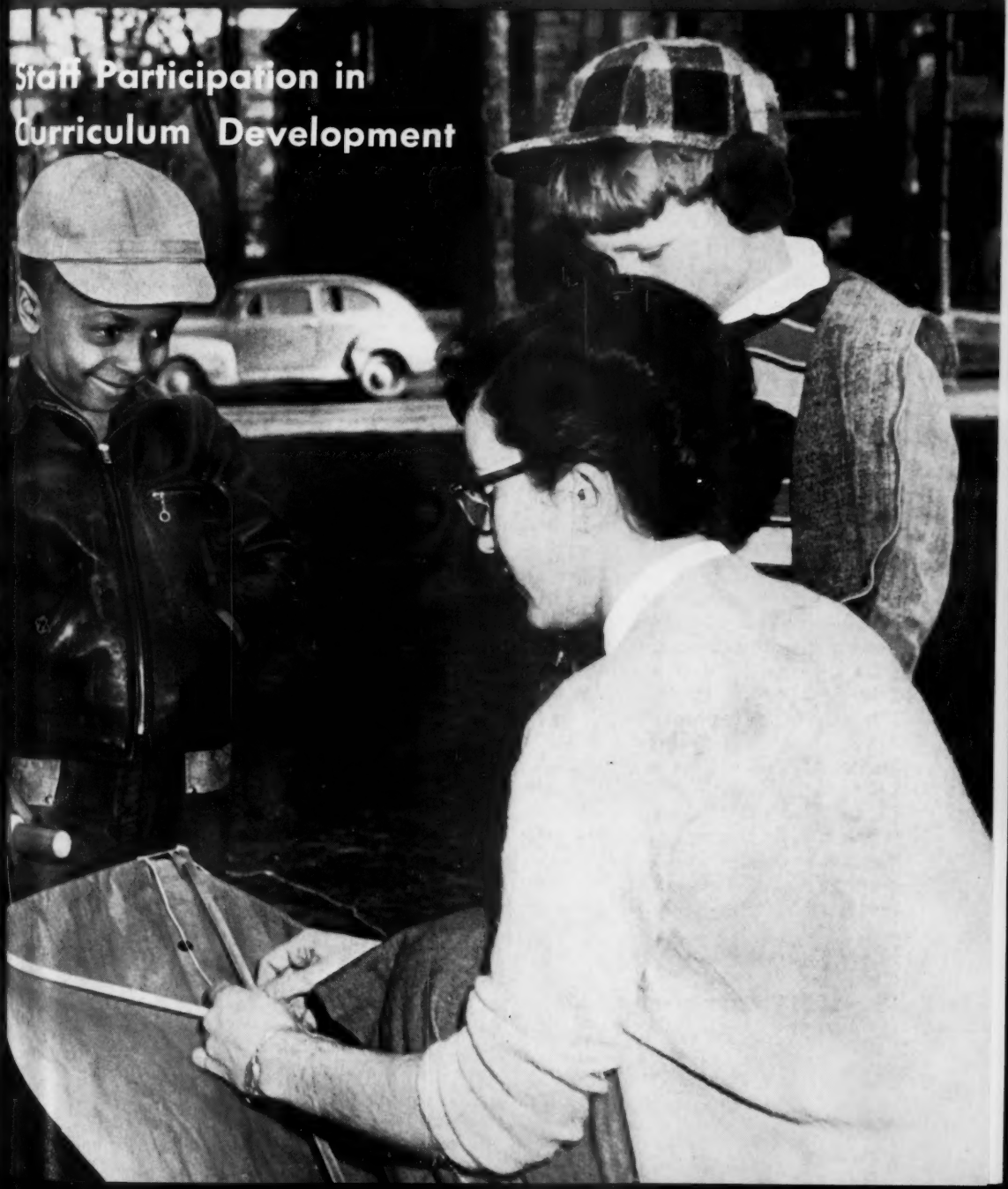
JOURNAL of the ASSOCIATION for SUPERVISION and CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT, NEA

Staff Participation in Curriculum Development



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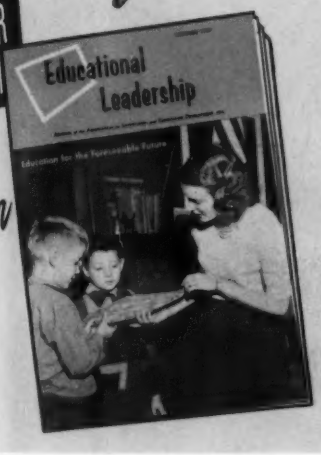

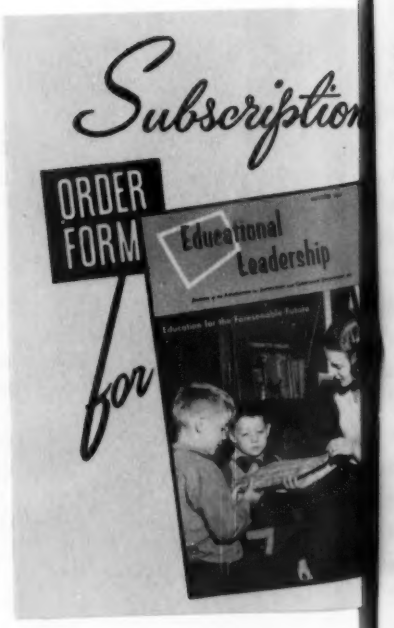
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Editorials

There's Need To Improve the Process

IT HAS seemed to make such good sense—this involvement of teachers and other members of the staff in the process of curriculum improvement. It evolves so logically from our democratic convictions and from our understanding of how changes in practice are brought about.

Yet some of our patrons, and, indeed, many of our professional colleagues are challenging this procedure. They point to basic problems which must be faced. In this day of heightened public interest in the program of the school, searching questions are being raised about the manner in which curriculum decisions are reached, and about the means for carrying them into effect.

Before you read the thought-provoking articles in this month's EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP you may want to take a moment to consider some of the issues and problems confronting your school with regard to staff involvement in curriculum improvement.

Do you have trouble explaining to the public, and defending the results of the "broken front" approach? Mary McMillan in her article "Wings Over Our Shoulders" refers to it as the "rhythm of group work." It is obvious that if a staff or individuals within a staff are to carry some responsibility for the identification of problems for study, and for carrying forward a program of action, the problems won't always be the ones the principal, or the chairman of the local Better Schools organization, would have chosen.

Should the variation in the experience and competence of teachers make any difference in their participation? Much as we might wish that all teachers were highly capable and professionally motivated, we know this is not the case. Can we justify placing in the hands of such teachers a major responsibility for making curriculum decisions?

In a nation noted for its successful application of mass production techniques to industrial processes questions are raised about a school system which can not or does not promulgate a curriculum developed by experts. How is a carefully integrated and sequential series of experiences in science to be provided the pupil who moves from teacher to teacher year by year if each teacher is permitted to modify or participate in the "improvement" of that curriculum?

Perhaps the questions being raised are extreme. Good practice certainly makes use of the expert. But how effectively? What skills do teachers need to make good use of consultants? And what skills do the consultants need to develop? Are there not some problems that can be dealt with better by individuals or groups other than the school faculty? June McLeod in her article "Teacher Participation in Meeting Some of the Problems of Double Sessions" points out that teacher participation will not solve the basic problems of providing more classrooms, more teachers, or more books.

You may grant that teacher participation is good, but can a teacher afford to give enough time to curriculum improvement activities to make his involvement more than superficial? Faculty meetings seldom get down to basic issues. Members of curriculum committees exchange

their "gripes" or list their problems, but seldom get into action. One of the most promising of the approaches to curriculum improvement, the "action research" project, bogs down because of the time and energy required of the researcher. Catherine Broderick and Barbara Mason report their research on staff activities considered helpful and those considered non-helpful. They list, among those characteristics most frequently present in the least helpful activities: "We participated in discussions," and "We examined our classroom practices." It is very likely that the teachers concerned were not unwilling or uninterested in carrying their projects forward to more productive ends, but that they found the pressures of their other responsibilities interfering.

It may be that your questions center not around the desirability of staff participation but have to do with the need to improve the means by which we do it. A most searching examination of what happens to the individual teacher as he engages in a process designed to change his own behavior is reported by Miss McMillan. If we believe that curriculum improvement is more a matter of changing the actions of the teacher than it is changing subject matter content, then we must study more carefully the impact of the program on the individual. The changing of people is a complex process. What kinds of help and resources are needed? May not the psychologist or the psychiatrist be as essential as the curriculum specialist?

Our lack of skill with and understanding of the group process may account for many of our difficulties. How does the individual teacher engaged in an action research project share his interest, his plans and his findings, with others on the staff so as to gain their support and understanding? Who should take the initiative in organizing a group for action? What percent of involvement of the total staff is needed if a curriculum improvement project is to be effective? What if some staff members do not participate at all? How can the members of a staff engaged in a curriculum project gain the satisfactions and rewards essential to the maintenance of morale and continued work?

Then, could it be possible that we have expected teachers to play a large part in this most important aspect of our educational program but have failed to give them the necessary tools and equipment? Are they involved in the selection of the materials of instruction? If curriculum problems are to be approached creatively it may be quite important that there be freedom to examine and procure appropriate texts, library materials, films and records, art supplies, and the like. What about the facilities and tools for studying the problems of curriculum? Many a school building has been constructed with primary attention to classrooms to house pupils, and offices to house secretaries and administrators, but with no attention to a place for teachers to work individually or in groups on curriculum problems.

What should be provided by way of a curriculum laboratory in a local school building? The minimum essentials would seem to be *a place* in which to meet and work, *materials and equipment*, and the *resource personnel* needed to help in the organization and carrying forward of curriculum projects. The place might be a room or several rooms designed to accommodate individual, small group, and large group activities. The materials might include a group of professional journals, some of the newer professional books, and a careful selection of courses of study, sample texts, and other resource

materials related to specific problems being tackled by staff groups at the moment. A file of resource materials and resource personnel available for classroom use would be valuable. The equipment should surely include a typewriter and a duplicating machine; possibly, a coffee maker! Resource personnel could include other staff members, the principal, consultants from the central office, parents, and college staff members. The provision of such a curriculum laboratory might easily be one of the keys to effective staff participation.

The listing of these problems which interfere with the realization of all the high values we have assumed were to be found in staff involvement in the curriculum improvement process may serve to make us defensive . . . or depressed . . . or determined to move ahead in a constructive attack on such problems. I hope it has also served to whet your interest in reading the challenging articles which follow in this issue.

One further exercise I recommend, however, before indulging in the pleasure of sharing ideas with the distinguished panel of authors included within these pages! Just what *do* you consider to be the strengths of including the school staff in the process of curriculum development? If your convictions carry sufficient vitality they may help you see through the obstacles to the underlying values. As a starter I would propose these:

1. It is important that the teacher carry large responsibility in planning curriculum activities so that such activities may be the most appropriate ones for the particular pupil(s) concerned.

2. Curriculum improvement depends in large measure on a change in behavior on the part of the teacher. Changes in behavior are most likely to occur through participation in problem solving activities.

3. While subject matter experts, curriculum specialists, supervisors, administrators, and many other people concerned with the curriculum have roles to play, the teacher is in the unique position of carrying curriculum plans into action. The teaching staff can contribute practical ideas born of this experience. We must not fail to exploit such a resource fully.

—Robert S. Fox, *director, University School, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.*

Balance in the Curriculum

AT THIS writing, three months have gone by since that day in early October when Russia triumphantly announced the successful launching of Sputnik I. During this time America's response to the portentous event has presented a spectacle of national hand-wringing and breast-beating which only recently has shifted to a more mature consideration of the implications of Russia's ascendancy in the world of science and technology.

Educators were not surprised when education became the whipping boy for the loss of American prestige. Schools and colleges have always been convenient scapegoats for those who feel compelled to place blame, or for those who desire to escape responsibility for decisions or actions which have not been

wise. It is ironic that in a few weeks the position of the national administration, as well as that of many local boards of education and communities, can change from an attitude of indifference or opposition to new demands on education to one of almost total reliance on education as they envision it. Education has become the rallying point for disillusioned Americans, shocked out of their complacency. A "new look" in education seems to be the style demanded by this near-panic over recent events.

What are some of the changes in and for education which are advocated by those who see the American school system as crucial to our future? From press, radio and television come the answers in a flood of recommendations of the President, admirals, congressmen, industrialists, scientists, educators—and "the man on the street." Four major concerns seem to trouble those who advocate changes in the educational scene.

1. "The role of the intellectual must be elevated in our society, both economically and socially. Teachers, researchers, scientists, mathematicians and others who push back the frontiers of thought and action must be given more social prestige and adequate salaries—at least as much as given their counterparts in Russia."

There remains the question of whether such an attitude is only a temporary expedient geared to the idea that intellectuals have suddenly become important means to new and crucial ends, or whether they will be returned to their former status of "eggheads" if and when the emergency is met.

2. "Individual differences among students constitute a major problem in democratic education." (A strange and wonderful discovery for many, seen only in the light of Sputnik.) "Provision for individual differences among pupils in abilities, interests and needs requires facilities, teachers and methods which are expensive, but we must provide them."

The gifted child, again seen by some as a special kind of means to these new ends, is brought into the center of the focus on individual differences and their importance in education. The proposed provisions for special programs for gifted youth prompt misgivings in terms of what they may do to individuals and to our concept of public education in America. Will the public school of America revert to the public school of England from whose traditions it only recently escaped?

3. "More and better guidance services are needed to insure that more young people are tested and counseled into scientific and technological careers. National testing services, counseling centers, and scholarship grants must be provided to identify, attract and educate youngsters capable of going into scientific fields."

No one questions the need of more counseling services in the schools. However, to make guidance synonymous with telling pupils they ought to be scientists and mathematicians is educationally naive, and philosophically debatable. Such manipulation of students' goals and expectations may be appropriate in Russia, but seems incompatible with our democratic ideals. If a draft of our youth-power is necessary, we should have it. Guidance is hardly the word, however, for such a turn of events.

4. "The curriculum content and teaching methods of our schools need revision. Science and mathematics must have a central place in the curriculum of all pupils. For some youths who can become highly proficient in these areas there

should be more courses offered earlier in the grades and with higher standards expected."

The question of maintaining balance in the curriculum, or of purposely creating an imbalance, is an issue which cannot be disposed of easily. All curriculum decisions are value judgments, by someone, some place. An arbitrary decision for more mathematics and science on whatever value basis will not make these values acceptable to the learner, or the content teachable.

In addition to these major concepts of educational changes, some have argued that more homework should be given, stricter discipline must be maintained, a longer school day and year are needed, extracurricular activities ought to be curtailed, married teachers must be eliminated, and educational television might be introduced more generally. These latter proposals are readily seen to be of a different order from the first four, most of them suggesting "pet gripes" or "axes to grind" which may be unrelated to the current crisis.

The fact remains, however, that clear thinking is called for in the face of these many clamors for improvement and change, particularly when many appear related to goals for which professional educators have been working many years. Now we find in 1958 some strange new allies, protesting the need for more education and money to buy that education. Crash programs are demanded. We must guard against succumbing to the idea that curriculum change and educational progress come in this way. We in ASCD, working with others who are conscious of the problems and complexities of institutional change, must caution against precipitous policy formulation and action under pressure and panic. Sputnik has not changed the laws of learning or the principles of child growth and development. One hopes that it has not altered our beliefs about freedom, human dignity, and other basic values.

Education must still be an attribute of government, not a tool. People must continue to be seen as ends, not means. Even in times of crisis such basic tenets must be held fast. If we do not preserve them, we may find ourselves pursuing the educational policy and program of Russia whose philosophy we are committed to negate in the world.

Cognizant of these grave problems in aims, policies, programs and outcomes of education in the Sputnik era, ASCD has planned for its yearbook in 1961 to be devoted to the problem of achieving balance in the curriculum. The task of the yearbook committee is a difficult one at this time, because one cannot predict the shape of things to come in the schools during the next three years. If drastic changes are made, the yearbook will be a document coming too late; if we find ourselves in 1961 still pondering the need and form for revisions, the yearbook could make a significant contribution.

In either case, members of ASCD need to be alert to these proposals for change, many of which are conceived in panic and delivered prematurely in the hope of helping America keep up in this era of competition with the totalitarian aims and projects of Soviet Russia. The ASCD 1961 Yearbook Committee welcomes suggestions from the membership of the Association on what this volume can contribute to the current scene.

—Paul M. Halverson, *professor of education, Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York. Dr. Halverson is chairman of the ASCD 1961 Yearbook Committee.*

MARY L. McMILLAN

Wings Over Our Shoulders

Problem points sometimes arise as staff members participate in a curriculum improvement program. The author shows that growth can occur as these problems are worked through.

". . . All that I thought was good was not good. My self-image changed. The situation was clear; only a change could be the answer. I had to change. How? Insecurity! Frustration! A searching within! . . . ."

". . . Throughout the entire year I had moments of depression when I wondered if the program was really working—wondered if this were a better way . . . ."

". . . My feelings have been from one extreme to the other. At times the dregs of bitterness could not be worse. At other times I have caught myself looking over my shoulder to see if 'wings' were beginning to show . . . ."

". . . It seemed to me that we were actually treading on new soil and I love adventure. It seemed that I was a partner in making a new contribution to the world . . . ."

THESE ARE teachers speaking—teachers who participated in an in-service study that resulted in rather dramatic changes in curriculum. This curriculum improvement program is on-going and this report presents a view-at-a-point-in-process.

Setting for the Study

This study is district-wide. It involves the staff of two high schools, one junior high school and seven elementary schools. Four of the elementary schools are nine- to twelve-teacher schools and three are two- to three-teacher schools. There are 107 teachers in the system. The secondary principals teach one period each day. In the three larger elementary schools the principals have full-time supervisory and administrative schedules. In the three smaller schools the principals teach full time. In the intermediate-size school the principal spends part time teaching and part time supervising. The Central Office Administration curriculum staff consists of the superintendent and a curriculum coordinator who works with both secondary and elementary schools. A consultant from the State University works with administrators and teachers in the in-service program.

The school system serves a semi-rural area in which the major industries are iron mining, cattle raising, and providing tourist accommodations.

Basic Assumptions

The approach to the in-service study is based on assumptions about how curriculum is *really* changed. One basic assumption is that change in curriculum requires change in people—administrators and teachers. A second assumption is that changing people is a complex process that may require a kind of total reorganization of the self—a process that demands time and effort on the part of those who change. A third assumption

MARY L. McMILLAN is curriculum coordinator, Iron County School District, Cedar City, Utah.

is that an action research program is an effective way to change curriculum practices.

Ways of Working

The in-service curriculum study has two major phases. In the beginning, the language arts area was the focus for change. For one year each teacher and administrator worked on an individual action research problem developed around a specific language arts objective of particular interest to him. Research in group dynamics indicates that group work is more effective in producing change than are individual effort and activity. Accordingly, at the beginning of the second year the study moved into the cooperative action research phase. The cooperative research centered in any curriculum area of concern to the group. Several different organizational patterns emerged. Some work-study groups included the entire faculty; other groups cut across school lines and involved teachers from two or more schools; some groups were organized within one faculty. In this study cooperative action research continues to be the major approach to effecting change in classroom practices.

Problem Points in Staff Participation

The purpose of this article is to point out problem points which may arise when a staff participates in an in-service curriculum improvement program. A look at just a sampling of problem points may help schools or districts engaged in a similar study hold more realistic expectations for work-study groups.

The Changing Self-Image

One of the most challenging problem points in staff participation in curriculum development is how to work with people who begin to see themselves in a new light. When an individual glimpses what his behavior and role should be and senses where he is in relation to the desired behavior he frequently experiences a kind of shock. This is almost a traumatic experience for a sensitive person. Feelings of inadequacy, of insecurity, of guilt over past behavior well up in the individual. He may see himself as not a worth-while person, as a failure in his work; he may despair of finding the know-how and of possessing the strength to reach the new goal. These feelings may generate resentment, hostility and negativism toward the study itself and toward the people in leadership roles. The depth of these feelings is illustrated in these responses of teachers:

"My feelings during this experience were a mixture of failure and success—mostly failure. Sometimes I felt I was succeeding quite well and I was sure it was paying big dividends and then some little (or big it seemed) incident would bog me down in anxiety and insecurity. At one time I seriously considered resigning."

"As I gained insight, frustrations grew. I cried. I couldn't sleep. I talked with my fellow-teachers and my supervisor. I taught and evaluated and cried."

"This year was a year of heartaches and frustrations. Many times I felt I couldn't go on, but the support given to me by my superintendent and supervisor gave me courage to keep going."

"I realized how completely inadequate I was. There were terrific feelings of inadequacy and inferiority. . . . It would have been very easy during the first year and a half of our study to have left the profession and felt very good about it."

Staff members in this study who demonstrate deep behavioral change seem to experience and work through this kind of reality-testing. It appears imperative that someone be on hand in

these situations who can give solid support and encouragement.

Giving Recognition and Praise

A problem point in staff participation is giving adequate and just recognition and praise to individuals and groups for their efforts and achievements. The ineptness of local leaders and of the outside consultant in giving recognition and praise results in accusations of favoritism and unfairness. On a few occasions interpersonal antagonisms reach an explosive high. The perceptions of some members of one work group indicate how serious this problem can be:

"Deep and lasting frustrations came from what I thought was unjust reward and (this) has not been entirely cleared up."

"My greatest disappointment came when we found that one individual was going to reap the reward and was receiving help that wasn't shared with the group."

"The consultant must be very aware of human feelings and differences and he must have the welfare of the group at heart above any personal or ulterior motive."

Unless rapport is established that enables these kinds of feelings to be put on the table where they can be examined, the curriculum study may literally explode. In this district-wide study those in leadership roles are not as creative as they need to be in developing ways and means to give praise and recognition to staff members who are making innovations in curriculum practices. Staff members also find it difficult to encourage and support each other as they work side by side in developing new approaches to learning.

Securing Involvement

Change requires involvement. A problem point in this study is securing involvement of all teachers. Something more than lukewarm commitment is needed to carry on curriculum experimentation and evaluation. Individual differences are a reality in teacher—as well as student—groups. There appears to be a difference in personality structure of participants. Some are quite receptive to change, others resist change. Though, from the observer's point of view, the environment and the socio-psychological climate seem to be the same for the members of a work-group, individuals respond quite differently. Some evidences of non-involvement are:

A feeling that the problem is forced upon participants

A feeling of negativism and depression throughout the study

A feeling of need to get on with the more important work of giving assignments and hearing lessons

A feeling that the results are to benefit someone in a status or leadership role.

In working with all of the teachers in a district in a change program, greater attention must be given to what triggers the individual to want to change, and to creating the kind of environment in which each teacher may find challenges and invitations to at least try something different.

Anticipating Rhythm in Group Work

Because there is quite a wide range in the degree of involvement of individuals, groups do not move in the direction of the change goal at the same rate. With respect to the same change goal, some teachers have made the innovation a confirmed practice; others are in the data-gathering, trial stage; others have made only slight effort to inaugurate the change; others have made no attempt to implement the practice in the classroom. For example, in the area of record keeping, about 38 percent of the teachers make a confirmed practice of assessing and recording pupils' feelings about facets of the school program; about 20 percent are in the trial stage—testing

and experimenting; about 18 percent have made sporadic efforts; 20 percent have not attempted to assess how pupils feel about methods or practices currently used in the school.

Since there are many work groups operating at different stages, the district-wide study progresses with an uneven or broken front. There are times when the project appears to move forward quite rapidly and there are times when the project appears to move little or not at all.

This rhythm in group work is observable not only in the "horizontal" advancement toward the change goal, but also in the "vertical" movement of entire groups. Even in task-oriented groups there are "highs" and "lows." All participants may be more comfortable if they are helped to understand this phenomenon and to analyze the factors that contribute to the highs and lows. Unless this rhythmic pattern is anticipated there may be a tendency for individuals and groups to give up when they reach a low.

Factors identified in this study which contribute to the highs are:

Children's positive responses to the change practice

The analyzing and interpreting of evidence collected by the group

The implementation of new concepts and ideas presented by the consultant or found in current literature

The specific helps that pave the way for next steps

Progress toward the change-goal that could be measured objectively.

Factors contributing to the lows are:

Negative interpersonal feelings that develop within the work-group

Lack of understanding and insight regarding goals and purposes of the study

Too great expectations regarding the rate at which change occurs

Feelings of being bogged down, of being overworked, burdened

A shift in the focus of the problem or project—following tangents.

Keeping Channels of Communication Open

Another problem point in this in-service study is keeping participants informed about what is happening in the district and providing opportunities for individuals and groups to share experiences. Attempts to keep communication channels open include:

Written communications which list the problems being studied and the names of the work-group personnel

Written communications that feed back to individuals and groups crucial findings as these emerge

District-wide sharing conferences which provide opportunities to exchange ideas, to learn from each other, to discover that people who are experimenting have similar feelings and problems

Workshops at strategic points in the school year which are designed to build and to strengthen a common philosophy in the district and which provide an opportunity to examine and evaluate findings from the total project

The consultants become the liaison in projects in the district because they work with all study groups. They carry ideas and helps from one group to another.

The focus in this article is on problem points in staff participation in a curriculum improvement program. Consequently, it may seem to have a negative overtone. In fairness to the project and to the administrators and teachers participating in it, it must be said that most of these problems have been worked through satisfactorily. The in-service study is effecting sound and exciting changes in classroom practices. An assessment of change indicates that to this point 108 classroom practices in 12 curriculum areas have been studied. Sometimes an existing practice has been extended or otherwise modified and sometimes a new practice has been intro-

(Continued on page 350)

CATHERINE M. BRODERICK
and BARBARA T. MASON

What Questions Need We Ask about Staff Participation?

What characteristics of curriculum development activities do teachers themselves identify as important in terms of improving their work with children and youth?

WHEN TEACHERS express their reactions to curriculum development activities available to them, a number of questions about present practice in staff participation arise. Until recently the opinions of teachers, the persons closest to the curriculum in action, have not been considered. And yet, by definition curriculum development activities are planned activities approved by the administration in which teachers and other staff members participate for the purpose of improving learning opportunities provided for pupils under the guidance and direction of the school. Only as schools and school systems have become concerned about lack of change in classroom practice resulting from staff participation in curriculum development activities has teacher opinion been probed.

Curriculum development activities have been considered most effective when groups of teachers and other educators have worked together on problems which they face together. Programs which might be city-wide or limited to one school building have provided a range of possible activities including general staff meetings and building meetings; departmental meetings; grade-level meetings and subject-area meetings; classroom observation and evaluation; intervisitation; attendance at institutes, workshops and conferences; committee membership for the study of special problems; writing curriculum guides, courses of study or resource units; attendance at in-service courses under school system auspices; studying written communications; membership on a curriculum coordinating council; consultation with principal, central-office staff member or outside resource person; demonstration; use of professional reading and other adult learning materials; use of school-sponsored television or radio, and so forth.

Yet, a number of studies conducted recently in school systems which have been working over a period of years in organized programs of staff participation in curriculum change have revealed that participants have often merely become more facile in discussing child needs rather than in solving some problems re-

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lating to needs. Both Doll (1) and Dropkin (2) have reported that many teachers involved in in-service study over a period of years showed evidence that they had acquired additional factual knowledge about child growth and development but continued using classroom practices which were not in harmony with the new knowledge. Recently, questions have been raised about the depth of the problems on which teachers work. Are teachers receiving adequate help in delineating problems as well as in solving problems? What characteristics of curriculum development activities do teachers themselves identify as important in terms of improving their work with children and youth?

A Beginning Research Study

Choosing this latter problem, a research team[1] from Teachers College, Columbia University devised a questionnaire as one way of finding out teacher opinion. If teachers considered some curriculum development activities more helpful than others, perhaps there were characteristics common to activities chosen as most helpful and characteristics common to activities chosen as least helpful.

Perhaps the persons responsible for coordinating curriculum development activities might plan to include more preferred characteristics. Therefore, the questionnaire asked teachers to identify the curriculum development activity which was most helpful to them in providing improved learning opportunities in their classrooms and what curriculum development activity was least helpful, to indicate the presence of 60 possible characteristics and to indicate which of the characteristics present were reasons for choice of an activity as most helpful or least helpful.

The characteristics were short action statements based upon selected assumptions about staff participation found commonly in recent literature in education. Most of the assumptions were related to the major aspects of the task of curriculum improvement as developed by Mackenzie (3) and were grouped under the categories of: *objectives of working, evaluation, process of working, communications, working arrangements,* and *maintenance of public understanding.* Additional assumptions, grouped under the category called *substance,* were concerned with the idea that curriculum programs be developed deliberately so that the sights of participants be raised. It was thought that *substance* was evidenced through the introduction of research in curriculum study, in group dynamics and in the nature of learning; through study of the role of the school in a changing democratic society; and through the development of new insights into the increasing body of knowledge which is becoming available for man's use in the second half of the twentieth century.

In order that teachers might have freedom to respond beyond any limitations which the 60 characteristics might impose, a series of open-ended questions was included:

- What reasons other than those checked did you have for selecting this activity as the [most, least] helpful?
- If you had been in charge of this [most helpful, least helpful] activity, how would you have improved it?
- What changes have you made in your classroom as a result of taking part in this [most helpful] activity?
- What next steps would you recommend as a follow-up to this [most helpful] activity?

Of the 244 elementary school and secondary school respondents in three met-

[1] Catherine M. Broderick, Robert Levin and Barbara T. Mason.

ropolitan New York City school systems more than half were women, more than half of the group were married and more than half had two or fewer dependents. Most of the teachers had taught six years or more but had been assigned to their present school five years or less. Over half of the sample had a Master's degree or beyond and half of the entire group had received the most recent degree since 1952. Most teachers had participated in curriculum development activities during the three years previous to the study. Most felt that their building faculty had been doing a good job teaching and most considered themselves moderately active in curriculum development activities. Most considered curriculum development activities an integral part of the job of a teacher, indicated that other people rather than materials or experience were the greatest source of help in improving classroom work with children, and said they welcomed additional professional help.

Some teachers in each school system had participated in all 20 activities listed in the questionnaire. However, the range of participation was from 243 attending faculty meetings to 42 making use of school-sponsored television or radio. Although attending faculty meetings was the activity most frequently indicated, only 10 teachers selected it as most helpful. In the total sample, elementary teachers selected grade level meetings as most helpful and secondary teachers selected departmental meetings as most helpful. However, there was no one activity designated by even half of those who had participated in it as being most helpful. General staff meetings were designated as least helpful by teachers in the three systems. Activities in which teachers participated in groups were designated by more teachers as most helpful than were activities in which teachers participated as individuals, such as conferences with principal or supervisor, or studying written communications. Individual activities, selected as most helpful, were more often indicated by teachers from the system which had a larger percentage of less experienced teachers.

All sixty characteristics received some mention as being present. The following, listed in order of frequency, were said to be present most often in an activity selected as most helpful. The first three of these characteristics were most often indicated as a reason for choosing an activity as most helpful.

We examined our classroom practices.
We participated in discussions.
The problem was important to me.
We considered a range of learning opportunities.
We understood the limits within which we had freedom to operate.
We considered the use of instructional materials.
I was required to be a part.
Objectives were studied in terms of behavioral change.
Learnings considered were related to grades before and after mine.
We considered improving teacher-pupil relationships.
I saw the relationship of this problem to a bigger problem.

The following characteristics considered desirable by the research team were indicated as present in a most helpful activity by less than 25 percent of the total sample. In this activity:

A consultant was present.
A consultant conferred with teachers.
The purpose was study, not action.
A member of our group served on the curriculum council.
Decisions made gained community support.
Lay persons were a part of the activity.
I gained ideas from lectures.
I observed in the classrooms of others.
We carried out an action research study.

Our leader proposed a method for beginning our study.

A leader directed our attention to curriculum theory.

Less than half of the respondents indicated an activity which was least helpful. Some of the characteristics indicated most frequently as present by teachers who designated a least helpful activity were:

I was required to be a part of the activity. (Only one teacher in every six who indicated this characteristic present in a least helpful activity indicated that this was a reason for choice.)

Only teachers were in this activity.

A small number carried responsibility.

I participated in discussions.

The activity met once.

We had refreshments.

We kept written records.

We examined our classroom practices.

A teacher was chairman.

The leader presented his solution to the problem.

The only characteristics designated by as many as 20 teachers as reasons for selecting an activity as least helpful were:

A member of the central office staff decided the topic for discussion.

A small group carried responsibility.

The leader presented his solution to the problem.

Although the questionnaire is only now in the process of being validated, data received have led the research team to raise such questions as:

Does the fact that staff participation is voluntary or compulsory really matter?

Is it necessary to provide a large number of curriculum development activities to meet effectively the needs of all teachers?

Do inexperienced teachers need a different type of curriculum development activity from more experienced teachers? Do inexperienced teachers receive more help individually (observations by principal, work with helping teachers) while perhaps experienced teachers receive more help from group activities?

What are some skills which possibly need to be developed in a school or school system in order to work effectively with a consultant or other outside helper?

What are some effective types of written records for curriculum development activities? How might they be used for mutual benefit within the group as well as for information to those concerned who are outside the group?

Further studies might be designed to investigate such areas as the influence of colleagues on teachers views toward curriculum development; teachers views of the activeness of their building faculties as compared with views of principals and curriculum coordinators; differences in views about curriculum development activities of teachers who have been graduated from multi-purpose higher education institutions as compared with teachers who have been graduated from teacher-preparatory institutions.

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KIMBALL WILES

Does Faculty Participation Produce Curriculum Improvement?

Evidence from research gives a clearer picture of specific benefits to be derived through staff participation in policy formation in a program of curriculum improvement.

FOR a number of years it has been asserted that faculty participation in decision making will bring about improved school programs. Little evidence has been collected to test this thesis. In some schools such a method has seemed to work. In others both faculty and administration have been frustrated in their attempts to implement it. Is there any validity in the idea or is it a fantasy which has gained credence through repetition?

Studies in Industry and Education

Although the hypothesis has not been tested by carefully designed research, certain studies in industry and education supply evidence as to its validity.

The work of DeHuszar (1) suggests that participation in decision making will result in the securing of more ideas and the consideration of possible solutions. A typical example presented in *Practical Applications of Democracy* was the attempt of the manager of a department in a manufacturing plant to improve the truck used for transporting materials within the department. The five operators of the truck were called to his office, one at a time, and were asked for suggestions. The employees were shy and reticent but each suggested one way to improve the truck. Still dissatisfied, the manager called all five operators together, told them they knew more about the truck than anyone else because they worked with it every day, and asked them to suggest improvements. He left them to work out their recommendations together. Fourteen suggestions were made.

If the experience reported by DeHuszar is typical, it would seem that faculty participation in decisions provides the opportunity for the faculty to choose from among a wider range of solutions because of the greater number of possibilities suggested. One caution that needs to be considered before making this interpretation is that the operators had had much experience working with the truck. Sometimes faculty members are asked to consider problems with which they have had very little experience and they do not have the background out of which to formulate recommendations for desirable changes. Do suggestions made by someone without experience with the particular problem have sufficient significance to justify their consideration?

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Some experimentation conducted by Leavitt (2) suggests that faculty participation in decision making is necessary if faculty members are to continue to be interested in the development of the program of the school. In this experimentation, four problem solving groups were set up. Each group contained five members. One group was seated in the form of a Y, one in the shape of an I, another as an X, and the fourth in an oval arrangement. In the I, X, and Y groups, the problem and the data were fed into the leader, who was situated at the center of the I, X, or Y. The physical arrangements were such that information had to be passed along from one individual to another. The leader had to decide on how the problem would be attacked and which phases of the problem and which data should be made available to each member of his work team. In the O group, the problem and the data were made available to all members. In the beginning the X, Y and I groups solved more problems more acurately than the O group. More discussion and analysis occurred in the O group and the interpretations were not as clean cut. As the work proceeded, however, the O group became more productive than the I, X, or Y. Efficiency in the O group had not increased noticeably. The change in the relative productiveness occurred because the persons at the ends of the I, X, and Y groups, who did not have access to the definition of the problem or the data except as a portion of the information was passed along by the leader, lost interest. The three people who remained most interested throughout the entire experiment were the persons who were in the leadership spot in the I, X, and Y groups. On the other hand, interest remained high for the people in the O formation.

The Leavitt research suggests that when the identification and definition of problems and the amount of data are restricted, the faculty members who are on the fringe will lose interest in the development of the program while the portion of the faculty in the inner circle will continue to be highly motivated and highly professional.

Coch and French (3) found that resistance to change is lowered through group participation in planning the modification. At the Harwood Manufacturing Plant, records showed that a change in assignment or work procedure resulted in an increased number of employees terminating their work with the company. Apparently dissatisfaction with the job and with the company resulted when a change was made. An experiment was designed to test the hypothesis that participation in the planning of change would decrease the amount of termination that typically resulted from a change. Four groups were established. In the control group, which involved no participation by employees in planning the change, an explanation was given to the group of the change that would be made and the reasons for it. In the second group the workers selected representatives from among themselves to work with management in planning the change. In two groups all the members involved in the work unit participated with management in redesigning the procedure that would be followed. All four groups were roughly matched with respect to efficiency rating, the amount of the change involved, and the amount of cohesiveness observed in the group. In the group with no participation there was lowered efficiency after the change. Resistance developed. Marked expressions of aggression against the management occurred. Seventeen percent of the

employees quit in the first 40 days. In the group in which the employees were represented production gradually increased and the attitude was cooperative and permissive. No one quit in the first 40 days after the change. The representatives increased in efficiency at about the same rate as the rest of their group. In the groups where there was total participation in the planning the recovery of efficiency after the change was faster than in the others and showed a sustained progress thereafter to about a 14 percent higher efficiency than the prechange level. The members worked well with their supervisors and showed no signs of aggression. No one quit in either of the total participation groups during the first 40 days after the change.

In light of evidence such as Coch and French collected, it would seem that decisions concerning change in program should be made by the people who will be asked to implement it. Plans as to how to proceed should be thought through either by all members of the group or by representatives who have close contact with all members of the group. Any administration that attempts to make decisions concerning change and how to effect it without involving faculty members in the decision courts lowered morale and lowered efficiency.

A study reported by Sherif (4) gives the reader pause. The subjects in the experiment went into a darkened room and observed a pinpoint of light. After they left the room, they were asked to estimate how far the light had moved. Judgments as to how far the light moved differed greatly. Following the recording of the individual guesses, all the subjects were brought together and time was provided for discusison of the movement of the light. At the completion of the discussion, the subjects once again entered the darkened room one by one and made a second individual estimate of how far the light moved. As the group members discussed their observations apparently some movement toward agreement occurred because after the second observation the extremes in judgments had moved nearer the average estimate of the distance the light had moved. The part of the experiment that must give those who are considering faculty participation in decision making cause for serious thought is that the light did not move at all.

Process is Critical Factor

Group thinking will not always result in wiser decisions. It may result in agreement on error. Compounded ignorance does not equal wisdom. Any faculty needs to be sure that in its work procedures time is provided for the collection of evidence on which to base decisions. A decision made on the spur of the moment without taking the time or making the effort to collect sufficient data to make an intelligent decision may result in a deterioration rather than an improvement in the school program.

One study deals directly with the effect of participation on program improvement. Sugg (5), as a part of the Kellogg Leadership Project at the University of Florida, studied the relationship between the operating patterns of principals and curriculum change within the schools in which they worked. The 24 most autocratic and the 24 most democratic out of a total of 125 principals in one county system were selected for study. Democratic operation was interpreted to mean bringing people in on decisions that would affect them, informing teachers and students of actions before they were taken and respecting the welfare and dignity of individuals. Authoritarian action

was considered to be the opposite of this pattern. No principal in the study operated democratically more than 70 percent of the time and no principal failed to operate democratically at least 30 percent of the time. Thus the comparison was between the effect of relatively more democratic behavior and more autocratic behavior of principals. Sugg found that in schools with more democratic principals: teachers were more ready for curriculum change, were not threatened as much by change and were making more changes in their work; more courses were modified and more changes were made in school services, daily schedules and guidance procedures. On the basis of Sugg's research, it would seem that if a principal hopes to carry on a program of continuous curriculum change he should involve the faculty in the decision making.

Needless to say, change does not mean improvement. Judgments concerning the quality of the change depend upon values held by the individuals making the judgment.

The evidence from these studies leads to the conclusion that participation of the faculty in decision making will result in higher morale, maintenance of interest and willingness to change, but does not guarantee that the changes will be more intelligent or improve the program. Whether improvement is made will be determined by the quality of the group problem solving process used. Securing participation is not enough.

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(Continued from page 342)

duced. Changes in staff members are evident. Some of the most promising changes are:

The experimental attitude and behavior of teachers

The increased insight and understanding of teachers and administrators regarding the way children learn

The new role which teachers demonstrate as they work with children

The increased objectivity on the part of teachers as they work with their own data

The increased interest in professional reading materials

The use of educational principles as a basis for answering questions and making decisions.

Though the problem points are real and at times most discouraging, more and more we are experiencing days when we look over our shoulders "to see if wings are beginning to show."

VERA LEE HEDGES, LOUISE HARRIS
RUTH SPIER and J. P. CAUSEY

Opportunities for Teacher Participation— in Research

Parish-wide involvement of teachers in classroom research projects has met with considerable success in the Morehouse Parish Schools.

TEACHERS in Morehouse Parish, Louisiana, have for many years participated in various types of in-service activities. Included are experiences in faculty study groups and parish-wide meetings, in which teachers work together according to grade levels in the elementary schools and in subject matter areas at the secondary school level. Most of the teachers annually participate in the voluntary workshop held during the last week of August to work on problems relating to curriculum improvement. Three times each year professional growth days are held, with the teachers planning and assuming responsibility for all speeches, discussions, exhibits and demonstrations. Opportunities are provided for a number of teachers and principals to spend a week observing and studying in some of the most outstanding schools in the United States. Whenever workshops or conferences of major importance are held within the region, a number of parish teachers attend to bring back to their respective faculties anything that may be helpful.

Each year the program of in-service education training and other activities devoted to professional growth has been expanded whenever the need has arisen. Joint planning on the part of all the school personnel has produced a program enlisting the participation of each teacher in the parish. These activities are promoted with the idea that the time utilized for in-service training is of greatest value when the teachers themselves work together with the supervisor to determine how it is to be spent.

One of the latest additions to the professional growth program is that of research by the individual teacher. Classroom research, or experimentation, is a means of involving teachers as they work with boys and girls to improve their own teaching practices. It is evident even from the brief experience of Morehouse Parish teachers that many benefits can be derived from experimental teaching. Among these benefits is

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the fact that experimentation enables the teacher to look critically at what she is doing and at the same time receive constructive help from her coworkers. It provides a means of locating real problems; it gives practice in securing data necessary for the solution of these problems; and it demonstrates for teachers the importance of withholding judgment until sufficient facts have been secured.

Experimentation provides an opportunity to use a variety of techniques for teaching the same thing to determine the superiority of one. It enables a teacher to realize her own responsibility for improved classroom work and for her self-improvement. Of the many benefits accruing from the Morehouse Parish program of classroom research, one of the foremost is the fact that the teachers, by conducting the experimentation within their own classes, are able to test at firsthand the many modern teaching theories. Learning through actual experience thus makes the teachers more willing to supplant with newer and better methods outmoded practices of teaching.

The project of classroom research in Morehouse Parish began with a small nucleus of teachers who voluntarily formed the experimentation committee. In February of the past year the supervisor invited all teachers expressing an interest in this type of work to meet with William M. Alexander, of the University of Miami, for the initial meeting. The consultant explained to the group the purposes, methods and values of classroom research. The group discussed the necessary procedure for making a beginning. Most of those present participated in the program of carrying on some research in the classrooms.

During the ensuing months the teachers selected individual problems on which they wished to do organized experimentation. Most of the problems selected arose from dissatisfaction with the results of certain classroom activities. Others represented the desire of teachers to evolve new and more effective methods of helping children develop various desirable characteristics.

Variety of Projects

In undertaking the actual research, the teachers were able to obtain help and suggestions from the supervisor, the consultant, the school principals, and from each other. References on action research, such as *Research for Curriculum Improvement,* the ASCD 1957 Yearbook, were supplied to the participants. Records were kept by the individual teacher of the project, of the various steps involved, and of some of the values derived through the project.

In April the group met again with the consultant and the supervisor to discuss the problems selected, the progress being made in attempting to solve them, and any difficulties being encountered. At this time many of the participants presented encouraging reports of the success of their work in research. The supervisor and consultant were able to observe many of the research projects in action by classroom visits and to offer further recommendations.

The problems worked on covered nearly every aspect of the total school program, including those concerned with the physical, mental, emotional, and social development of children. Much of the research resulted in the modification of a particular method of the teacher or the use of a completely different method.

Several teachers found that children's written work was improved considerably by individual conferences with the child-

ren about their compositions and by the keeping of folders for the written work. One teacher found a number of causes for the poor listening habits of children and formulated steps to remedy this situation. Much improvement was apparent as a teacher changed her method of teaching number combinations.

A number of teachers undertook research dealing with the children's social adjustment to the school environment. One teacher's project, for example, uncovered valuable ideas for helping children work more effectively in groups. Another effected a plan to improve the relationship of children on the playground.

By working out with her pupils a unit on healthful eating habits and proper table manners, one teacher was able to improve to a great degree the conduct of her children in the cafeteria. The entrances and exits of another class became quieter and more orderly after the teacher undertook classroom research to solve the problem.

In eliciting greater pupil participation in teacher-pupil planning, certain methods were found to be effective. One teacher chose to use certain ideas to promote better group work in her classes.

One of the best examples of the type of research done and the steps involved in its accomplishment is the project undertaken by two teachers at the same school. Both expressed dissatisfaction with the kind of writing their children were doing. One was interested in having her children develop greater independence. In their writing she felt they were leaning too much on her for ideas and accuracy. The other teacher was interested in helping children develop more fully their creative abilities. Their ideas and expressions, she felt, lacked originality.

As these teachers discussed their problems among themselves, with their principal and the supervisor, with the larger group and the consultant, they soon realized that their concerns were closely related and could be caused by the same or by similar reasons. Following a consideration of many possible causes of their problems, they decided to work from the assumption that the children needed more experiences on which to base their creative writing. These experiences should be in the utilization of sources other than the teacher to promote the children's independence of her.

Many materials and sources for information were provided and used. Teachers, children and parents worked cooperatively in securing those needed materials. Pets were brought in; aquariums were set up; field trips were made. Children visited the public library to bring in books on topics for which they lacked information.

One group set up a post office in the room for writing and posting real letters. Another group visited a bird farm where they saw both song and game birds, such as quail and pheasant. Charts and other types of records were kept. The children were encouraged to write about the experiences they were having.

At the end the teachers reported that the children's enthusiasm had spread to the parents. In addition to bringing in materials and talking with the teachers about the projects, the parents offered their assistance on arranging and conducting field trips.

Teachers Evaluate

The teachers are continuing to work with the same idea this year with their new classes. In evaluating their work, both teachers were well pleased with the results of their first organized class-

room research. Language skills of both groups were noticeably improved; the interest of both pupils and parents was stimulated; and a sense of independence was developed in the children. Of the personal benefits derived, both teachers felt they had learned to organize work better. Both felt closer to the children, their interests and their needs. The enthusiastic response of these teachers is typical of the feeling of the entire experimentation group.

Working with the teachers on their research problems caused the supervisor to become interested in trying out some experimentation in his supervision of instruction. He wanted to find out whether a teacher can improve his teaching by reading a good professional book and conscientiously testing the ideas contained in the book.

In carrying out the first step, the supervisor contacted seven junior and senior high school teachers in four schools and asked each one whether he would be willing to participate in an experiment. When the explanation was given, each teacher agreed to begin reading *Effective Teaching in the Secondary Schools* by Alexander and Halverson. Whenever he found an idea that seemed valuable the teacher would record this idea and try to incorporate it in his teaching. Notes were kept on each such attempt. These seven teachers worked in this manner throughout the year.

At the Professional Growth Day for junior and senior high school teachers one hour was allotted for these teachers to report on the topic: "These Ideas I Discovered Through Reading; This Is What I Did; and This Is What Happened." The project consultant attended the meeting to present his reactions to the reports and to answer questions raised by the teachers. The conclusion jointly arrived at was that a teacher can improve his teaching by conscientiously testing ideas from professional literature.

All the teachers who are involved in the use of scientific methods for problem solving are members of various parish-wide curriculum groups which meet monthly for a two hour period. Each group is in the process of developing curriculum guides for the purpose of helping teachers provide better learning opportunities for each boy and girl in Morehouse Parish. It is hoped that one of the major goals of each curriculum group will be to include in the guide suggestions which have been tested out in classroom situations.

The growth of the teacher as she works through the process involved in action research, coupled with the added experience of working in a group with other teachers in helping to develop a guide filled with the results of much research, will, no doubt, promote increased opportunities for wholesome growth and development of the children of Morehouse Parish.

After the completion of the various projects in classroom research last year, each teacher was asked to submit a brief record of the experimentation he had conducted in his own classroom and his evaluation of the work. A central committee compiled a general report on the entire program, including an over-all evaluation and recommendations for the program for this year.

The committee found that:

1. The teachers felt that the consultant was excellent in helping them carry out the entire program.
2. It was the consensus that organized experimentation is highly beneficial and productive of greater results.
3. The program stimulated much pupil and teacher evaluation.
4. A program of this sort enables the

teacher to single out more problems and apply scientific principles in solving them.

5. The entire group felt the work to be very stimulating and rewarding.

6. Experimentation makes teachers more willing to change their methods when better ones are found.

7. Teachers using the experimental method learn to look at facts before drawing conclusions.

In making recommendations for this year, the committee urged that the program be activated early in the year and that more teachers be encouraged to participate. Many of the group expressed a desire to have the same consultant work with the program again this year. Further recommendations made included suggestions that teachers working on similar problems might profit by working more closely with each other and that the same experiments might be tested with other groups.

In accordance with the committee's recommendations, the group for classroom research has already held its initial meeting.

A suggested form was given to each teacher as a guide. One-half page was allowed each of the following items on the actual form. The teacher will record on this form throughout the year.

(Form)

School ..... Teacher .....

Grade .....

Record of Classroom Research
1957-1958

1. I am dissatisfied with—
2. Some of the possible causes could be—
3. I have discussed this with—
4. My problem is—
5. My course of action is—
6. My plan for collecting evidence is—
7. These are the results—
8. I draw these tentative conclusions—

A LOOK AT CONTINUITY IN THE SCHOOL PROGRAM

Prepared by the 1958 Yearbook Committee of ASCD
Esther J. Swenson, Chairman $4.00

What has helped or hindered you in your progress through school?

This question was answered by 3000 school children—kindergarten through high school. Children and young people told of their problems and successes in moving to new communities and to new school levels; in regard to promotion and retention, teaching methods and teacher behavior; and concerning subject matter, grading and extracurricular activities.

How can we develop the school program as a continuous process?

With an insight into the reactions of school children themselves, the Yearbook discusses the objectives and principles to be considered in attaining continuity in the school program. A description of various current practices with an evaluation of each will help the educator looking for practical applications of desirable goals.

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KENNETH KOCH

St. Paul Teachers Participate— in Fact Finding

All staff members grow in professional service as they participate in fact finding, evaluation and curriculum improvement.

IN THE Saint Paul Public Schools, teachers and administrators place great faith in staff participation. They believe that the intelligence and experience of the entire staff are vital resources that should be tapped continually to help bring about improvement of the schools. Use of these resources has led to broad involvement and democratic action within our school system. Involvement with school problems usually takes place through in-service education projects and special group or committee activities. Membership on committees and participation in workshops are entirely voluntary. It is seldom possible to provide teachers with all the kinds of workshops they request. In addition to staff participation, the Saint Paul schools have encouraged lay participation in many of the school improvement programs and are proud of the contributions made by both groups.

Teachers have many opportunities to involve themselves in improvement activities. Each year, every staff member in St. Paul participates in one or more in-service activities and a large percent of the members serve on one or more committees or other fact-finding groups. There are always fresh and unlimited opportunities for teacher participation in fact-finding. Based on objective information, cooperative democratic action normally leads to improvements in education. The purpose here is to point out some examples of staff participation in fact-finding and some of the observable results. The use of fact-finding and recommendation-making committees in Saint Paul is so widely practiced that it is impossible to report on all such committees. To delimit this article, we will take a look at one of our newer junior high schools and its program, pointing out some typical examples of staff participation in its development.

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The Junior High School Program

As early as 1917, Saint Paul was using committees to obtain facts about school organization problems and to make recommendations. That year a *survey committee* recommended that Saint Paul institute a junior high school system. The recommendation was acted upon and considerable progress was made toward a complete junior high school organization by an extensive building program in the nineteen twenties. However, in the thirties, mainly for reasons of expedience (school population pressures

and financial problems) several of the junior high buildings were taken over for senior highs or elementary schools. *Another committee* in 1945 made a plea for a return to the K-6-3-3 system. It reported that this type of organization was best suited to Saint Paul and recommended "a return to such a system as soon as proper housing can be provided." More recently *a survey group,* directed by the Bureau of Field Studies and Surveys of the University of Minnesota, concerned itself with the cost of a complete school building program for Saint Paul. After making a detailed fact-finding study, this group recommended that Saint Paul .abandon the remains of its K-8-4 organization and build toward a complete K-6-3-3 plan. The study showed that this plan would cost less and that state aids would be more favorable to this type of organization. A *small group,* studying trends in reorganization of education both on the national and state level, learned that there was a marked movement away from the K-8-4 to the K-6-3-3 or the K-6-6 plans. As a result of the recommendations of these various groups Saint Paul is now engaged in a building program that is leading toward a complete junior high school system.

Two Committees Coordinate Their Work

When it was determined that a junior high school building program was to become a reality, *two committees composed of school personnel and others* were created. One was to plan and recommend the physical features thought necessary for a modern junior high school building, the other to plan a modern junior high school program. Members of the second committee were to acquaint themselves with modern educational philosophy, with the generally accepted functions of a modern junior high school, and with recent thinking as to the needs of young adolescents and the meeting of those needs. They were charged with designing an "idealistic" program achievable in 15 or 20 years. This second committee was set up partly in response to a request by a member of the first committee. This member, who was the schools' consulting architect, felt that new physical facilities should be designed to fit the program planned for the building. As a result, Saint Paul has renovated existing buildings and has built three new junior high schools that compare favorably with the best in the nation. More important, the committees have cooperatively developed a modern junior high school instructional program, some of it admittedly experimental.

City-Wide and Local Philosophies

Many school systems develop an identifiable feeling about schools and education but do not have a written statement of their educational philosophy. This presents an opportunity for teacher participation through committees to organize these feelings into a written statement. A few years ago St. Paul's *Curriculum Steering Committee,* thinking that there should be a written statement of "the philosophy of the staff of the Saint Paul public schools," named a *Philosophy Committee* to study and prepare a written statement. During its life, this committee organized several study and fact-finding projects. However, it took about four years before the committee members felt that they were ready to write a statement. Parenthetically, we should say that very often the value of projects such as this is not so much in the written statement produced as it is in the fact that groups worked cooperatively in studying and attempting

to solve problems, real to themselves. The committee's brief written statement was made available to the staff and to interested persons.

Core Curriculum Study

Many hours of committee work in workshops, university classes, and volunteer activities preceded the decision to organize core classes in the new junior high schools. Saint Paul had previously experimented with "double period" classes for several years in senior high schools. Before initiating these classes, a workshop was held with *each member on a committee* of his or her choice. After study, the committees made reports and recommendations. Most of the recommendations were accepted and put into effect. When programs for the new junior high schools were being discussed and decided upon *by various groups,* it became quite apparent to *the study committees* that core curriculum would be an important aid to help implement the functions and objectives of a modern junior high school. The larger block of time provides opportunities for emphasis on group problem-solving, teacher-pupil planning, socialization, guidance and counseling at the classroom level, and on many other activities that would be precluded by shorter periods.

Core teachers have been in the vanguard in taking advantage of in-service education activities. Many of them have attended local workshops organized specifically for core teachers. Some of these have been general in nature while others have dealt with specifics such as reading, art, parent conferences, arithmetic, and guidance and counseling.

Problems of Individual Differences

In May 1953 *a two-day workshop on individual differences* was held at a near-by camp with 60 registrants, 50 of whom were classroom teachers. *Seven subcommittees* studied various aspects of the general topic, "How to Better Provide for Individual Differences." After the workshop was over many of the participants continued to serve on a city-wide *Committee on Individual Differences.* Interest in this problem area led to another *teacher workshop* in the fall of 1954. A look at our junior high program reveals that an attempt is being made to follow many of the recommendations made by the workshop group and other committees. In general, after careful consideration of evidence from the study made, heterogeneous grouping is accepted practice. In the school we are looking at, three exceptions exist. There is one small class organized for low ability pupils (with below 80 IQ). State aid makes this type of grouping feasible. Two classes for gifted pupils are being carried on experimentally in the 9th grade, one in mathematics and one in science. These have been initiated as a result of recommendations made by *teacher committees. Teacher committees* have also been active in recommending supplementary materials for these classes and for writing guides for instruction. In general, we believe that, as a result of workshops and committee work, teachers in this building have an increased awareness of pupil differences and are doing something about them.

Marking and Reporting Practices

Reports to parents and pupils that we use today in our St. Paul secondary schools are much different from those in use ten years ago. Here again the changes have resulted largely from recommendations made by *teacher committees* formed at *workshops* set up to study facts and trends in this area.

Activities Programs

"Exploration" is one of the important functions of a modern junior high school. In St. Paul, *committees and individuals* have been at work trying to make this function effective in the lives of our early teen-agers. All junior high schools have class periods scheduled during the school day, once or twice a week, for special activities to supplement those which normally come up in core and other classes. Some of our schools are experimenting with scheduling most subjects four times a week rather than five so that more time can be given to special interest activities. The student activities usually center around: (a) exploring career opportunities, (b) exploring recreational opportunities in the community, (c) exploring recreational activities in the school, (d) exploring useful hobbies, and (e) exploring opportunities for better human relations. All activities are centered around expressed needs of early adolescents.

We believe that curriculum improvement is an evolutionary process and that an on-going program of curriculum development should bring active participation to as many teachers as possible. We believe that curriculum study and improvement is, of necessity, closely associated with our supervisory and in-service education programs. We believe that there are always opportunities for teacher participation in fact-finding and curriculum development. Through the look we have taken at one of our junior high schools, we have seen this kind of staff participation in:

Studying to determine the best school organization for St. Paul

Planning the building and physical facilities to meet the needs of the program

Developing a modern junior high school program

Studying and then writing a city-wide educational philosophy

Writing local school philosophies

Attending workshops and serving on committees to better understand core curriculum

Attending workshops and working on committees to learn how to better provide for individual differences

Serving on committees to help write curriculum guides and resource units

Studying marking and reporting practices and then helping to devise methods of reporting in keeping with a modern educational philosophy

Serving on committees to plan and develop a vital and worthwhile special activities program.

These have been given as samples. There are many other examples that might have been mentioned. Our experiences lead us to believe that through fact-finding and follow-up measures, the possibilities for the improvement of education are unlimited. In St. Paul we are proud of the acomplishments of our teachers. We have found that by encouraging freedom of thought and action they have developed interest, enthusiasm, vitality, strong professional attitudes, and qualities of leadership. Their resources of intelligence and experience have given us a better school system. Teachers who have participated in the creation of something that they feel is good and important become proud and happy people. That which has been produced is theirs!

JUNE McLEOD

Teacher Participation in Meeting Some of the Problems of Double Sessions

Lasting solution to such problems as double sessions, crowded classes and scarce materials can be achieved only through action by the wider community.

THE SCHOOL system in which I teach has been on double session ever since the school population passed the first 100 children, which is about 10 years now. At present, approximately 7,000 children in kindergarten through the third grade are on a shortened schedule. What kinds of problems do double sessions present? How can teachers participate in solving such problems? How does participation preserve teacher sanity, let alone sustain morale? Surprisingly, double sessions have value in that they practically *require* teacher participation, whereas single sessions are less desperate in their demands.

A strange conversation took place the other noon between two kindergarten teachers who share the same room. "I found the trainman's head," said one.

"Oh, good, I found the tree trunk yesterday—under the piano," said the other. "Now a smokestack is missing."

"Don't worry. I'll look for it this afternoon."

Searching for lost parts to puzzles is, of course, not solely associated with the sharing of a room, but the problem becomes intensified where, in our kindergartens, four sessions, totaling over 120 children and two teachers, must live in a single room and share everything from the teacher's desk, tables, chairs, coat hooks, bulletin boards and scissors to pet ducks and rabbits. A shared room, to function smoothly, requires a high order of shared responsibility; and, although the degree of one's responsibility is related, to some extent, to the personality of the individual, it is also true that one is more likely to take care of and feel responsibility for those materials which he has had a part in choosing, and the greater the part, the greater the responsibility.

In the school where the foregoing conversation took place, kindergarten teachers take a major part in preparing the kindergarten yearly budget. They know the amount they have to spend, they consider capital outlay, instructional materials, and all other classroom needs. Over several years' time they have become avid catalog collectors, yearly visitors to equipment and school supply houses and efficient budgeteers. They

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have found that by taking care of materials which they receive, such as puzzles, there is money the next year for items they have long wished for. Thus, responsibility in purchasing equipment leads to responsibility in using and caring for equipment. This is indeed a matter for consideration for any single session school systems that do not so involve their teachers. It has also been noted in our double session grades that teacher participation in the selection of classroom materials has arrested any tendency toward mass teaching; i.e., it has led to greater individualization of programs for children.

Making Adjustments

Another way in which teacher participation in overcoming double session problems of shared rooms came about was through teachers' presence on planning committees for new schools. The first schools built were optimistically planned as single session schools. Then teachers, with some dismay, began to realize that it might be a long time before the wave of children would slacken. Thus, teacher pressure on their representatives on building committees of the new schools began to show results. For example, larger tack board areas were allowed so that a greater proportion of display space is available for 60 children. As storage has been a tremendous problem for the double session, the new schools have many more shelves, cabinets, and bookcases. In addition, provision has been made for a small compartment for each child in the coat area. Since even his desk must be shared, this arrangement has given the child a sense of something that is his own.

Another problem arose, a problem of a different nature, when teachers who work the split session found that a four hour stretch, without a break, was extremely exhausting. This problem, presented at a staff meeting, was discussed by teachers of both sessions with the principal. The result was a mutual exchange. Now, the morning teachers have a snack period at the same time their children do, but away from them; and the afternoon teachers get a break while the morning teachers have a snack with their children. Since morning teachers remain at school until two o'clock anyway, and afternoon teachers arrive at ten, their day is not lengthened.

The values received have been threefold. The teacher, refreshed, returned to her class, to teach with renewed vigor and a brighter spirit. The "relief" teacher came to know the other's children, and in the casual exchange of information and comments about the children, the teacher often gained greater insights into her own children. Further, the fact that this was discussed and agreed upon as policy involved the principal's support in carrying out the decision. Had it only been talked about and then left to each teacher to follow through on, some would have failed to do so. This would only have created small resentments, and, in the end, no action would have resulted, and the problem would still have been present.

Whenever double sessions are created, it is usually because there is not enough tax money to build sufficient schools, or schools fast enough. Another urgent reason is, quite often, there are also not enough materials and supplies. Twice as many children are placed in a room, but not twice as many books. There is hardly a teacher on double session in our schools who is not interrupted several times a week, if not daily, by someone who wants to borrow books. Or, the teacher gets ready to begin to read with some chil-

dren and finds that all the books she was using the day before are gone, the teacher of the other session having lent them, or someone, in desperation, having taken them. Surely no one would expect that two teachers, just because they share the same room, would have need for the exact same number of books, or even the same books. Nor does what averages out on paper to be enough books come out that way when applied to the needs of boys and girls *in* school, let alone taking any home to read as is so often done in well-supported single session schools.

Gradually, through every means possible, including teacher recommendations from the curriculum committees on which they participate, an increasing supply of books is reaching the classrooms; but even so, the solution to this problem is not an easy one. It involves desperate measures, an extraordinary budget allotment for books, or extraordinary clerical measures to manage the supply. The answer, quite clearly, lies in the elimination of double sessions, since the amount of teacher participation in such a matter would have to be unusual to have even a slight effect.

Although two teachers may share the same room, they often have little opportunity to share ideas and plan together for living in the same room. They may meet only as one is leaving and the other beginning his day. Even the faculty meetings must be held separately. Lack of opportunity to meet together had become such a problem to the double session staff at one school that they asked if there wasn't some way that they could occasionally meet together. Heretofore, the only joint meetings were monthly ones held in the evening before P.T.A., and this included some 25 intermediate grade teachers who were not on double session. As one teacher expressed it, "It seems like such a silly duplication and waste of time for a group of teachers to discuss a problem already discussed by another group as though it had not been discussed."

As a result of this request, the monthly faculty meetings have been revised and now the part-time teachers meet together for a portion of each meeting. One group of third grade teachers solved their particular need to meet together by moving some chairs into the hall during the regular school session. The classroom doors were all open, the children were studying, still under the watchful eyes of their teachers, and the teachers were conferring with their colleagues of the other session. This was only an emergency solution. There is no real substitute to finding an adequate and proper meeting time to consider problems together. To many problems associated with double sessions there are no satisfactory solutions, regardless of the degree or quality of teacher participation!

There are many problems which only a return to a single session can solve, for example: the shortened day, with the ever present cry, "There is not enough time to get everything in"; and inherent in this, the usually subconscious, but nevertheless present, tendency to put more pressure on children younger and younger to achieve in academic areas, thereby creating an imbalance between the tool subjects and the creative arts; and, to some degree, an emphasis on homework out of proportion to the readiness of the child for learning—all because the day is so short!

Similarly, teachers feel frustrated because even though they want to have a room ready for children, notes on the chalkboard to greet them, a new display

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WESLEY H. CARLSON

Interage Grouping

As parents and school people together consider new ways of meeting children's needs, a presentation such as this may be of direct benefit.

DURING the past 20 years a number of public and private schools throughout the United States have been experimenting with various ways for grouping young children. One of the most successful of these systems has been the interage grouping. This is a plan of school organization in which an effort is made to provide maximum opportunity to meet the individual needs of all boys and girls, by combining the flexibility of the old country school, the facilities of a modern city school and the know how of present day research.

What Are the Factors?

For the best education in an elementary school the following factors must be considered: (a) The operations of the school must be flexible; (b) There should be a general growing-up process in place of the grade placement system; (c) A child must have a purpose in education; (d) A group should operate in a democratic way; (e) The mental health of children is of prime importance; and (f) A child should be respected as an individual.

1. *The operations of the school must be flexible.*

The desirable type of experience is qualitative rather than quantitative; therefore, a flexible type of school organization is necessary. The child must be free to explore. His course of action would take him into the community where he would be aided in discovering and in seeking satisfaction for his needs as he grows. The situation may well expand outward for depth of understanding.

With this type of organization there would be no need for definite grades "per se." Grade placement tends to limit the capabilities of a child. A group should be heterogeneous. How good is the system of standardization throughout the school system? Isn't it a commonly accepted opinion that a group of varied backgrounds tends to give a broader outlook to a problem? This type of class is striven for in seminars, in the solution of civic problems, etc.; therefore, would not our elementary classes be enhanced by deemphasizing the unimaginative places where standardization tends to reign?

It is felt by many that fixed grade standards, units that "culminate" and grade groupings that mark education into distinct steps are barriers to continuity in learning.

Children are purposefully selected through results obtained from sociometric tests and objective and subjective evaluation by the teacher of the child's

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social, academic, emotional and physical development.

An interage system is advantageous in placing a child in a group that seems to offer the greatest learning opportunity for him. A healthy class climate is more conducive for children to learn in. This grouping makes the efficient placement of a child more feasible, by allowing more freedom in placing the child in one of several groups. Teachers at the beginning of the year can compose groups with greater learning potentials.

Children are gregarious, which makes group integration vital. The oneness of the group tends to increase the quality of the experience for each individual. In finding answers to questions, solving problems or fulfilling a need, the ideas of many, working in a common group, will have far greater effect than the ideas of one individual. Likewise, the greater the quality of cumulated past experiences the group brings together, the greater will be the quality in the thinking.

Interage grouping can help to make possible better balance between the two sexes. Overly hostile and aggressive children can be spread throughout the groups and not concentrated in one class, thus giving them the opportunity for more individual guidance.

2. *There should be a general growing-up process of the grade placement system.*

Interage grouping tends to stress maximum individual growth and reenforces the fact that a child is growing continuously and does not reach definite levels of attainment at the end of each year. The first schools in this country were ungraded. All the children went to school in one classroom. As our population increased schools became crowded. Grade organization was developed to take care of large numbers of children for mass teaching. Each classroom became a grade and acquired definite grade standards which all pupils were required to meet during a given year. If a child failed to meet the minimum essentials he was and still is expected to repeat the grade. Recent research studies show that it is better for most students to continue with their group rather than be left back. It is obvious that not all children are able to attain these minimum essentials, and it would not be administratively expedient to hold back these children. It is generally felt by authorities that nonpromotion does not maintain grade school standards, does not appreciably decrease the variables within a grade, is not a good motivation factor, and does not bring about better adjustment.

Youngsters of a given age do not have the same growth patterns or achievement during any "grade." To say all youngsters are to be promoted so they will continue to grow alike educationally is to disregard the facts.

In an interage group a teacher could be compared to a horticulturist who specializes in the raising of gladiolas. First, he prepares the soil to provide the best growing conditions. He is conscious of the previous handling, dipping and storing of the plants, and of the conditions that are necessary before he can plant them. After he has planted the bulbs, he nurtures the plants through their entire growing season until they have reached their fullest bloom, constantly giving attention to individual plants. Yet he gives them all the same type of care when it is expedient.

The growth and development of a child cannot be forced to fit into arbitrary time intervals. The brain does not grow at the same rate of speed as the

glands of the body nor do these sections of the body grow at a continuous rate of speed. Similarly, a child may not be ready to learn to read when he is ready for numerous other things. Children's first experiences in school should be successful and satisfying. Plans and procedures must recognize all of a child's needs—physical, social, emotional and spiritual, as well as intellectual. Wide differences exist among individuals, which calls for careful planning so that growth may be wholesome and continuous. Child growth is complex and each child has a "pattern" of growth that makes him "different" not only from other children but from other developing patterns of his own growth.

3. *A child must have a purpose in education.*

Unless there is a purpose to learning the student will not act sincerely, and the learning experience will not have meaning. Each individual has his own growth pattern. Each individual learns in proportion to the learning experience provided, the amount which applies to his own needs. Although the curve of learning will differ from child to child, each child should show achievements according to his ability.

Informal experimentation of the teaching of reading tended to show that children of average intelligence or above can learn to read satisfactorily during their first three years in school, if their needs for this experience are adjusted to their abilities. In an average first-year group probably a third of the children will be ready to learn to read early in the year and will make "normal" progress. Probably another third of the group will need special help in some aspects of reading readiness and will start a little later. They should be making good progress by the end of the year, but will be below the standard of the more "mature" children. The other third of the group may spend half the year or more on experiences designed to build the reading they need and will make only a beginning during the first year. Because of the careful attention to their needs, they will accelerate their speed of learning as they gain in maturity, and may do as well as the more rapid starters by the end of the three-year time span. This parallels what is known about children learning to talk. Some use words very early and are fluent speakers by the time they are three years of age. Others are very slow in developing speech and may be distinctly retarded linguistically at the age of three. When these children enter primary school at the age of six it may be impossible to tell them apart. The slow starters may speak as well and talk as much as those who started earlier. The end result is approximately the same, but the curve of learning has been different. The same may be true of learning to read.

The differences in the capacities of the other skills is equally great. There can be no justification for the practice of assigning the same lessons continuously to all children, regardless of the subject.

The teaching of social studies also presents a challenge to the teacher. Any experience or activity in which children engage requires the participation of groups of pupils on different levels of maturity. All pupils will not be ready to engage in the same type of reference work, written reports or oral discussion. A committee organization is the goal, within which each one can find his place and in which he can be encouraged to make his maximum contribution.

4. *A group should operate in a democratic way.*

Democracy places its highest value on

people. Our schools must insure freedom of expression, promote creativeness, and develop skills. Emphasis also must be placed on developing sociable human beings who can work and live cooperatively with others, and who understand how to solve their individual and group problems with consideration for all.

Realizing that there may be child-like solutions to these problems, a great deal depends in early childhood upon the teacher, and to a greater degree, the parent. The teacher should have the insight to lead or direct children to be less dependent each year and to assume greater responsibility in proportion to their development and growth.

Children learn democracy by practicing it. As a member of a democratic society, it is one of our duties to respect the rights of all individuals. We should believe that every person who must abide by a decision should have a part in making it. The decision must come from inside the situation and not outside of it. This does not mean that a "laissez faire" atmosphere must prevail. The child must have responsibilities to the group which match his capabilities. He must respect the rights of others when working on a common core.

5. *The mental health of children is of prime importance.*

It is easier to prevent maladjustment and failure than it is to care for the complex problems which accompany these misfortunes. If children were placed in small interage class groups, it would be appreciably less difficult to study each individual child and adapt the curriculum to his needs.

Good mental health is not achieved merely by the removal of obstacles, but when the "needs" of an individual are met. The organization of an interage group should tend to meet individual needs. It should help in developing a sense of personal worth by providing opportunities for each person to experience the satisfaction of his needs for belonging, achieving success in some activities, developing meaningful personal goals and values. Interage grouping should help to develop good interpersonal relationships through the experiences and satisfactions entailed in cooperatively participating with others. The achievement of group goals and the gradual expansion of the type of groups in which a child finds himself are of inestimable value.

The needs of boys and girls have become more apparent in recent years. A smooth transition from the home atmosphere to that of group living in school has come to be recognized as both reasonable and necessary.

Some children have been put under strong pressure to follow an external, imposed, artificial program so that their own best sequence pattern has been interrupted. Sometimes fear and tension have accompanied the pressure. To blindly learn what someone else has planned leads many individuals to work at less than par. The "passing of time" during any grade only widens the gap that separates children's achievements in the common learnings.

All children should begin school by coming to think of themselves as productive learners. No child need learn that he has come to the end of learning—that he has easily done all there is to do. No child need learn that he has come to the end of his ability—that it is hopeless for him to try to succeed.

All children have the healthy experience of being able to help others as the basis for planning and guiding in their learning experiences. One aspect of personality growth of any child is different

from the other aspects of personality of the same child.

A child's readiness for each experience must be considered. A child working at a high level will need to be challenged and provided with rich opportunities. Another child will work at a slower pace and will need much help and guidance. Concern for the individual demands thoughtful planning as well as a wide variety of materials, activities and experiences.

In an interage class teachers are free to help individual children learn in ways best suited for them. A seven-year-old who likes to swing with his six-year-old friend can still read books about rocket ships with his eight-year-old friend who has like interests. An eight-year-old who is lacking in reading skills but who is able to do difficult arithmetic problems, need not "stay back" in a grade with younger children on the basis of reading.

One of the purposes of the interage unit is to dispense with rigid plans of "grading" and promotions of young children and establish an educational program based upon the natural development of each child in his own pattern of growth.

In an interage group, with its age span, the children work at different things in different ways, and no one is made to feel conspicuously ahead or behind the other. All children have the healthy experience of being able to help other children in some things and accepting help in others. Flexible grouping and individualized instruction make it possible for each individual to work up to his capacity and to progress as rapidly as is possible for him. Superior children should be stimulated because there is no grade average with which they could become self-satisfied. No ceiling is set on their learning. They grow according to their needs regardless of their age. There is no restraint in growth and the teacher presents a challenging program equal to the child's abilities.

It is inevitable that some children will progress at a slower rate than others. Often children who show a slow learning pattern in the early primary years make a sudden spurt at the later primary or early intermediate level. Other children, because of the quality of their home environment, mental ability, emotional and social development, or because of physical defects, remain slow learners always. But in every case each must be helped to realize his own strengths and limitations and to strive for maximum success at his own level.

These children should be relieved of tension producing, growth retarding grade standards and expectations, thus making it possible for them to feel comfortable with differences in maturity and ability. The slow learner should not be placed with less sociable, less mature children. Neither should he be labeled as "stupid" or any other such term. In an interage class he does not "stick out like a sore thumb" but can be placed in a group with which he feels at ease. The attitude of the other children toward him and what he thinks they think of him, in many cases, is more of a hurdle to overcome than the learning of the specific techniques and skills involved.

The lessening of peer status squabbling, stratified subject matter demands, group norms, and other pressures should result in a warm, friendly group, free of tension, made up of students conscious of their responsible roles as group members.

6. *A child should be respected as an individual.*

Respect for a child as an individual

will provide wholesome leadership-followership experiences of unusual number and variety. One of the finest outcomes of this experience is the relationship that can exist between younger and older members of the group. It stimulates cooperative attitudes among children and reduces pressure because of less competition to meet a certain standard. For example, in the family unit, younger members respond to the stimulus of the older members and without undue pressure will want to do things that older ones are doing—both in terms of material they handle and the quality of their performance. The older children, under the guidance of the teacher, find new ways of growing as they assist younger children with their work: they achieve new levels of satisfaction and responsibilities by becoming useful to the group as a whole. This should result in the development of better social integration by the end of the year.

Goal: Continuity of Growth

A master teacher for several years, rather than brief intervals under the care of several teachers, should result in productive learning for the children. Each teacher who conscientiously tries to meet the needs of children, spends considerable time in getting acquainted with a child and learning his needs. Promotion, coming at frequent intervals, tends to disturb the continuity of the child's learning and decreases his effectiveness. Frequent change of teachers undermines a child's security in attacking tasks, since each teacher differs in methods of work and in approach to problems of teaching and learning.

A teacher thoroughly acquainted with the philosophy and the standards of attainment toward which he will point his efforts over a longer span, can plan his work more systematically around the needs of the children under his care. He need not feel pushed for time or held in line by rigid grade requirements. These are his children to guide and help to develop for two or more years.

There is more opportunity for thorough understanding of each child and effective use of that understanding in long range planning for and with the child in an interage unit. A teacher living with a group of children for a period of two or three years also has more opportunity to build rapport with parents and to develop wholesome home and school cooperation. Growth records can be more thorough and reports more meaningful and valuable to parents. Much can be gained by the teacher, by continuing with the group, for he can evaluate his procedures and practices over a longer period and search for better methods.

Children's curriculum experiences can be vital and continuous. Complete records of each child's growth and of parent-school cooperation are a must for maximum development.

An interage primary unit does not in itself guarantee a good educational program. The teacher is still the crux in the implementation of this program, but a teacher, free of inflexible restraints which an interage group offers, should do a better job. The nature of this type of grouping also encouages the teacher to put forth his best effort in meeting the individual needs and abilities of the children.

The Importance of People

Column editor: Richard L. Henderson

Our February column, contributed by JIM BROWN *of the English department at North Texas State College, developed the thesis that contemporary education of the progressive variety fails utterly to develop children's intellects, and that its products thus have no more impact on social movement than do the graduates of barber colleges (for instance).*

Without presuming to answer Jim's charges one by one, we offer the following dialogue in the hope that it may make a bit clearer some of the theory on which contemporary education is based.

RICHARD L. HENDERSON

Conversation

Professor Prowe: We were talking about the function of education.

Professor Cahn: I was saying that the school exists to cultivate the intellect, not to promote social adjustment, facial beauty, or home comforts. These may be desirable, but they are irrelevant to the school's real function. To survive, we first and foremost need frontier thinkers, and the educational system must set their production as its major purpose. The content of intellectual education is the data of the disciplines, the funded capital of man's experience, so to speak; and its method is the rigorous application of young minds to the mastery of these data. Now since relatively few possess the mental capacity for this kind of education, we must inevitably come to what most societies have known and practiced for centuries: The dual system of education. By trying to develop everybody's intellect, we have developed nobody's intellect.

Prowe: what do you mean by the "intellect"?

Cahn: The organ of memory and reason.

Prowe: How do we go about developing this organ?

Cahn: By requiring that it struggle to acquire the facts, principles and concepts which constitute the raw materials to be sorted and drawn upon at need.

Prowe: What need?

Cahn: To meet a situation, to solve a problem, or simply to satisfy a curiosity.

Prowe: Then we master data in order to resolve unsettled situations?

Cahn: Yes.

Prowe: So that the acquisition of facts and principles does not in itself constitute intellectual development?

Cahn: Certainly not. We learn in order to be able to meet new demands effectively.

Prowe: And if, as in some utopia, there were no problems, there would be no need for intellectual development?

Cahn: I suppose not.

Prowe: Then the kind of intellectual development you describe really begins with problems?

Cahn: True.

Prowe: And would you say that these problems are personal, or social?

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Cahn: I suppose that all problems are ultimately social.

Prowe: Even such a problem as paying one's rent?

Cahn: A man's condition and feelings affect others.

Prowe: So ask not for whom the bell tolls?

Cahn: Very good.

Prowe: So we conclude that intellectual development depends upon the existence of problems, social in nature?

Cahn: This is our conclusion.

Prowe: Very well. Now since intellectual development depends upon the existence of problems, and the data of experience are tools for solving problems, would you think it logical for education to be organized around problems rather than around data?

Cahn: I would think it logical to teach something to solve problems with, first, and the long history of education seems to support this idea. Recently, however, the professional education fraternity has discovered a way to educate the young without teaching them anything.

Prowe: At this point I am concerned with *how* something is best learned. Do you own a car?

Cahn: Of sorts.

Prowe: Have you read your operations manual?

Cahn: I have looked it over.

Prowe: You have not studied it seriously?

Cahn: Not exactly. Why should I?

Prowe: Assuming that you are driving at night through some of our western desert land, and your motor fails, would you need to use your manual?

Cahn: I suspect that I would.

Prowe: How would you go about it?

Cahn: I would check the section dealing with motor operation.

Prowe: And you would search out all the information you needed to understand the trouble?

Cahn: I hope so.

Prowe: So that, although you lacked the necessary information beforehand, the pressure of the rather serious situation forced you to learn enough by reading and experimenting to get at the trouble?

Cahn: Possibly. Are you comparing the data of car operation to the data of the disciplines?

Prowe: Both are tools for solving problems, are they not?

Cahn: Obviously, but are car mechanics in the same league with the wisdom of the ages?

Prowe: I merely said that both are tools for solving problems. Now after solving your problem, while you still lacked information about the brakes or the steering assembly, you would know better how to tackle motor difficulties next time, even if only by way of confirming or eliminating a possibility?

Cahn: True.

Prowe: This simple analogy is based upon the considerable evidence now available that learning best takes place within the problem context; that not all data in a given field need be committed to memory even if it could be, so long as we know it to be readily available; and that those data which are seen to be useful and which indeed are actually used, are best retained.

Cahn: I deplore the constant insistence on usefulness! Must we eternally sacrifice the aesthetic on the miserable altar of utility?

Prowe: If one wishes to read, compose music, paint, write, or simply think—are these activities not pleasurable and thus useful to him?

Cahn: Absolutely. I insist that they be encouraged for their own sake!

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Prowe: I think that on reflection you will see that instead of limiting or preventing such activities, the problems approach actually stimulates and encourages them.

Cahn: It had better! Now about your evidence on learning: I have a feeling that this evidence, produced by and for professional educators, would be inadmissible in court as pseudo-scientific.

Prowe: I can only ask you to suspend judgment until you have examined the careful studies of learning by college students conducted by Tyler and others. You must decide on the basis of your own investigation. And incidentally, please reflect on our shared despair at the wretched ignorance of many of our own graduates who are products of the very kind of program you espouse.

Cahn: This is a bit unkind, but I shall reflect.

Prowe: Touché! Now would you say that problem-solving involves a process, a skill, and that it is conditioned by habits and attitudes?

Cahn: Please explain.

Prowe: Is it possible for a man to be learned, to have mastered the data of certain disciplines, and yet be unwilling or unable to act upon what he knows in problem situations, and thus fail to have any useful impact upon society?

Cahn: For instance?

Prowe: Educated or learned political figures, civic leaders, lawyers, medical men, educators, and even theologians, who wilfully or ignorantly reject scientifically verified findings when their implications threaten traditional practice or the claims of the multitude?

Cahn: Habits and attitudes often appear to dominate reason.

Prowe: Would you then agree that the school be as concerned with the skills, habits and attitudes involved in problem-

solving as with the acquisition of data to be sorted and drawn upon at will?

Cahn: Not at all. These skills and habits ought to be learned on the job. School is not a job.

Prowe: Well, let me further illustrate the point I have just made about effective learning taking place best within the context of the problem. Is the medical internship a job?

Cahn: Not entirely. The intern is supervised.

Prowe: To develop further his skills and to prevent his doing harm to the sick? So this is really part of his schooling?

Cahn: Yes.

Prowe: Do you approve of this kind of internship?

Cahn: I surely do.

Prowe: Does the young citizen serve an internship after leaving school to learn the habits and skills of using his knowledge to solve social problems?

Cahn: Not in the same way.

Prowe: In what way then?

Cahn: He takes a small part in community life, learning how best to tackle the larger social problems.

Prowe: So he learns by making small mistakes in small situations?

Cahn: Exactly.

Prowe: How are the mistakes detected by this small citizen and his fellows?

Cahn: By the effects in the community.

Prowe: The effect being that some people suffer, or are less well off, or less happy?

Cahn: These are some indications.

Prowe: Would you object if we could set up a community in which young citizens could serve their internships without bringing about any real suffering or unhappiness?

Cahn: No objection, except that such a community would not be the real thing.

Prowe: Could you conceive of the school as such a community?

Cahn: The school is not the real thing.

Prowe: It is not a real society?

Cahn: It is only a small part of real society.

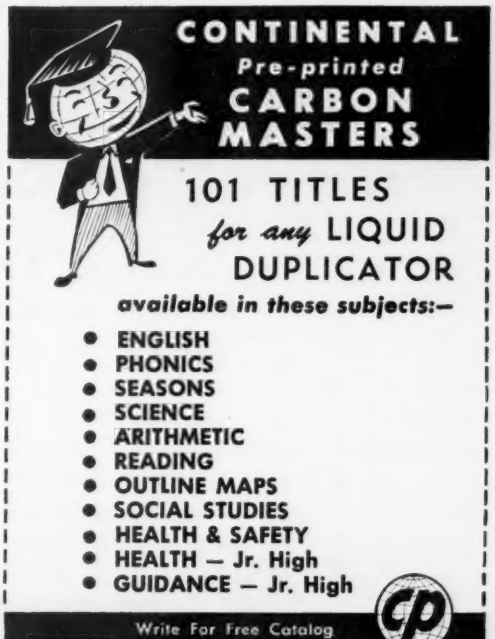
Prowe: Is a community all of real society?

Cahn: Of course not, but its problems are much like those of the larger society.

Prowe: School children face situations demanding certain skills and knowledges, and are constantly confronting problems of human relationships, caste and class, care of property, finance, political structure, and the like. Do not these problems parallel those of the non-school community?

Cahn: Possibly.

Prowe: So that it might be productive for the school to provide not only the opportunities for acquiring facts and concepts, but also the opportunities to learn



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the skills, habits and attitudes involved in effective problem-solving?

Cahn: This is the reason behind all the "doing" in schools?

Prowe: This seems to be one reason.

Cahn: Such doing as building grocery stores? Or transferring the classroom into a Mesozoic landscape? These kinds of "doing" are related to the solutions of social problems, while learning the data of economics from standard textbooks is not related?

Prowe: Both may be related. But tell me, what do you think of the psychological problems involved in human migration to another planet under the pressures of over-population?

Cahn: If you are serious, I am not at all concerned right now.

Prowe: Nor are young people in school concerned with international law (unless we are in real danger), or with race relationships (unless the school is multiracial), or with banking problems (unless they have considerable bank accounts). But they are concerned with problems whose solutions will have some more or less immediate effect upon their lives, as you are concerned with the proper function of the school. You are an educator, and what goes on in schools has real meaning to you.

Cahn: Now let's go back to the planet business. I contend that if the teacher considers this a significant problem, and keeps me at it long enough, I will become interested, and will amass many new and important data and bring them to bear on the problem, and so will widen my horizons and learn to think in the bargain.

Prowe: This may be true, of course. Are you saying that any problem, however remote from present reality, can become interesting if one sticks with it long enough?

Cahn: Certainly, provided it is not beyond the mental grasp of children.

Prowe: Then on what bases shall the teacher make choices among problems?

Cahn: They must be within the grasp of children, and of course they must conform to reality, which eliminates problems of exploding the schoolhouse or of flying to the sun unassisted.

Prowe: These criteria do not narrow the field much. Are there others?

Cahn: You wish me to mention that of interest, but I am convinced that few interests of children lead to educative activities.

Prowe: What major teaching responsibility does your point suggest?

Cahn: That children are led beyond their immediate interest into problems of wider scope and greater significance.

Prowe: Exactly. Then to our criterion of interest we need to attach the idea that we introduce problems which are *capable* of *exciting* interest?

Cahn: This is what I mean. You place a great burden on the teacher!

Prowe: Greater than that of lecturing, or laying out information to be learned, and then testing for its acquisition?

Cahn: Much greater.

Prowe: I am wondering if there is another outcome of the internship beyond the development of skills in problem-solving?

Cahn: Such as?

Prowe: When you are seriously ill, do you prefer the judgment of several physicians to that of a single member of the group?

Cahn: Several, of course. Their combined resources should be greater than those of any individual group member.

Prowe: And the personal or medical prejudices of one individual are less likely to gain sway?

Cahn: True.

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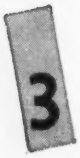

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Prowe: And would you say the same of a situation in the field of science?

Cahn: Yes.

Prowe: And when social problems are to be attacked, you would again prefer the judgments of several social scientists about the nature of a problem?

Cahn: I believe so.

Prowe: So that intellectual power really comes to fruition in group situations?

Cahn: In a way, certainly.

Prowe: Then would you agree that an important outcome of the internship might be an understanding of and an appreciation for the greater objectivity normally derived from group attack on common social problems?

Cahn: Working together would, I suppose, generate such.

Prowe: Returning to your idea that many children lack capacity for intellectual development, would you agree that society is faced with an infinite variety of problems?

Cahn: Certainly.

Prowe: Problems which cut across, or straddle, many fields of knowledge?

Cahn: True.

Prowe: And that being complex, the analyses and solutions require many different kinds of talents, skills and understandings—spatial, mechanical, artistic, verbal, and the like?

Cahn: Yes.

Prowe: Would you further agree that few possess, or can be helped to possess, all or enough of the varied talents needed for effective solutions?

Cahn: Very few indeed, these days.

Prowe: So that the solutions require many different kinds of intelligence, so to speak.

Cahn: Yes, yes.

Prowe: Now since we tentatively agreed that education can more effec-

tively proceed through problem-solving, does it not follow that persons of varying degrees of intelligence and of different kinds of intelligence, can profit together? The verbally gifted contributing what they are able, the mechanically gifted what they are able, and the others contributing their diverse talents to whatever aspect of the problems lend themselves to these talents?

Cahn: This, of course, would be most difficult to arrange.

Prowe: So, beginning with problems, the kind and the amount of information, and the kind and complexity of the skills any child, including the gifted child, could acquire, need not be limited by others, but only by the child's own natural capacities?

Cahn: Granting this approach, it would appear so.

Prowe: And there would be nothing to prevent, but everything to encourage, children's personal and individual growth through solitary reflection and guided study so vital to the production and implementation of ideas?

Cahn: True, using this approach.

Prowe: And therefore, we need not separate children on the basis of superior or inferior mental capacity?

Cahn: Apparently not, although the problems approach would demand extremely capable teachers, all sorts of laboratories and equipment, small classes, and indeed a thorough reorganization of school programs, among other things.

Prowe: Plus the freedom to inquire, boldly?

Cahn: This above all.

Prowe: I see that classes are about to begin. Shall we continue later?

—RICHARD L. HENDERSON, *professor of education, Agnes Scott College and Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia.*

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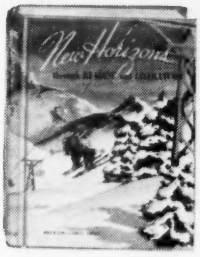

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Curriculum Bulletins

Column Editor: A. Harry Passow
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NOTE: The following faculty members of Teachers College, Columbia University, assisted in the preparation of this column by evaluating the materials in their areas of specialization: PROFESSORS LOUIS FORSDALE, MAURICE H. FOURACRE, ROMA GANS, WILLARD J. JACOBSON, MAGDALENE E. KRAMER, DOROTHY McGEOCH, ALICE M. MIEL, PHILIP H. PHENIX, MYRON F. ROSSKOPF, FRANCIS SHOEMAKER, and PAUL F. W. WITT.

• Akron Public Schools. *The English Language Arts, Grades 7-8-9.* Akron, O.: the Schools, 1957. 150 p.

This guide is designed intelligently in terms of subject matter and learning activities, reflecting up-to-date professional thinking in the area of language arts. The outlines for the seventh and eighth grades are organized around suggested experiences and grade expectancies. Units of work are presented, some in more detail than others. On the ninth grade level, a two-track plan features sections on College Preparatory English and Contemporary English. Reading, writing, speaking, and listening are seen as integral parts of each unit rather than as isolated activities. The newer media of communication are considered but not to the same extent as the more traditional means.

• Board of Education of the City of New York. *English-Speech Language Arts for Senior High Schools.* Curr. Bull. No. 12, 1955-56 Series. New York: the Board, 1956. 100 p. $.40.

This course of study is intended to guide individual schools and special committees in stimulating curricular activity in the language arts area. Such activities would involve implementing this course of study by means of additional materials. Part I discusses basic principles of a language arts curriculum which embraces all the related arts and skills of communication. Part II focuses on scope and sequence, with the curriculum organized around a central theme for each year. These themes represent succeeding stages of adolescent growth and help to crystallize a unified and integrated program of learning activities.

• Belleville Public Schools. *Arithmetic Curriculum and Resources, Teacher Guide, Grades K-3.* Belleville, N.J.: the Schools, 1957. Various paging.

This guide is a product of the 10-year-old workshop program which involves Belleville teachers in a systematic professional development. The introductory section to the five-part guide contains material basic to teaching arithmetic at any grade level—point of view, aids in learning, audio-visual resources, free and inexpensive materials, and learning process. Take-off point for each grade's guide is the developmental characteristics of pupils of the age group. Then, ideas on the nature of instruction, methods, readiness, outcomes, activities, materials, units and evaluation are presented. As with many workshop products, the most important results were the

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• Norfolk County Public Schools. *Astronomy* (47 p.); *Atomic Energy* (29 p.); *Getting an Elementary Science Program Started* (43 p.); *Electricity* (76 p.); *Marine and Sea Life* (36 p.); *Microprojector and World of Microbes* (70 p.); *Rocks, Soils, Minerals and Coal* (38 p.); *Science through the Seasons* (56 p.); *Small Animals in the Classroom* (61 p.). Norfolk, Va.: the County Schools, undated.

These resource units and handbooks on various aspects of science were designed as tools for the elementary or junior high school teacher who, though not a specialist in science, seeks to guide students through exciting experiences in this area. Each source unit is rich with specific suggestions for appropriate objectives, for activities for students and teacher, for materials which are published or can be prepared locally, and for experiments and demonstrations in the classroom. The materials are rather complete but their effectiveness may depend on supplementary in-service education to increase teacher skill and understanding.

• Philadelphia Public Schools. *General Science, Grades 7-8-9.* (55 p.) *Science Activities, Grades 7-8-9.* Various paging. Philadelphia: the Schools, 1957.

Both these bulletins are marked "tentative" and teachers are urged to "study this course, discuss it, try it, and make their recommendations" to a committee which will incorporate suggestions in a later edition. The strength of the first bulletin is in the two illustrative units on "Water" and "Weather." The units are community-centered and generous in proposing activities and resources. The bulk of this bulletin consists of outlines of a one-, two-, and three-year course of study to fit the science teaching practices of various Philadelphia junior high schools. As in so many other science courses of study, there is duplication and repetition in the areas suggested for the various grades. Considering the range of possibilities in such a dynamic field as science, duplication is hard to justify. The second publication contains experiments and other activities referred to in the first bulletin, along with the welcome inclusion of cross-referencing. Experiments—mere lists of apparatus, materials and procedures—lack the explanatory material which might help teachers develop meanings and understandings. Even to the experienced teacher, the purpose of some of the activities may not be clear. More opportunities for students to discover the local applications of science and technology would have enhanced the value of the latter bulletin.

• New Mexico State Board of Education. *Conservation Projects for the High School.* Bull. No. 19. Albuquerque: the Board, undated. 59 p.

This is an outstanding collection of tested conservation projects which can be undertaken by students and teachers. Many of the activities are fresh and imaginative and should work in other states as well. One or two seem impractical for schools because of the rigid requirements (such as enclosing a one-acre plot with a 16-foot fence). In general, the bulletin reflects the advice of experts in various fields related to conservation education.

• Minneapolis Public Schools. *Independent Activities for First Grade.* Minneapolis, Minn.: the Schools, 1956. 77 p.

Supplementing the curriculum guides for elementary grades, this handbook suggests ways in which the "teacher may capitalize upon the opportunities,

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• Alameda Unified School District. *Guide for the Development of Basic Study and Reference Skills, Grades 4-8.* Alameda, Calif.; the District, 1957. 107 p.

In studying individual scattergrams showing the relationship of achievement to ability, the Intermediate Reading Committee hit on the idea of a guide for teaching study and reference skills to overcome apparent weaknesses of average and superior students. Organized by grade levels, the monograph presents a developmental program and "includes skills, activities and materials for teaching students to locate, evaluate and organize information." A specific social studies unit was selected for each grade as an illustrative research topic. Divided columns are used to relate skills, activities and materials. The contents are complete, detailed and usable. Here is a curriculum guide that points the way to train for those much-discussed accomplishments: effective study and reference skills.

• Illinois Curriculum Program. *How to Conduct the Local Area Consensus Studies of the Illinois Curriculum Program.* Bull. No. 25. (1956, 47 p.). *How to Study Your School Population.* Bull. No. 26. (1957, 30 p.) Springfield: Superintendent of Public Instruction, State of Illinois.

In 1950, the ICP launched a program focusing on procedures by which lay and professional citizens could work to-

gether in studying the curriculum of a local school. The Local Area Consensus Studies materials and procedures emerged from these efforts. Bulletin Number 25 represents an attempt to unify in one publication all of the earlier duplicated materials. Introductory chapters deal with rationale and a brief description of the studies. Chapter IV deals with suggested procedures for administering the Parent-Teacher Cooperation Study and the Program-Related Consensus Studies. The discussion is in the form of responses to a series of questions. The last section deals with the study materials available. Bulletin Number 26 is a manual for a survey of pupils in a particular school system "to determine whether, on the basis of the kinds of children in the schools, additional educational services are needed." Seven specific steps in making the survey are discussed in detail: deciding how complete a survey should be made, collecting basic data from teachers, organizing data from office records, analyzing the data, summarizing data and evaluating present program, suggestions for action, and surveying available resources.

• Fresno City Unified School District. *We Live By Values.* Fresno, Calif.: the District, 1957. 40 p. $1.00.

"A Study in Moral and Spiritual Values" is the subtitle of this publication, which attempts to codify values and to illustrate how these can be taught in the classroom and other phases of school life. The staff of the T. L. Heaton School—through four committees—explored activities of other major school systems, the literature on the subject, the attitude of the community toward the subject and legal aspects of the study, and the procedures at the school in developing moral and spiritual values. In coordinating the work of the committees,

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• Hamilton County Public Schools. *Stand By, You're on the Air.* Cincinnati, O.: the Schools, 1956. 18 p.

This delightful little pamphlet is an excellent guide for acquainting teacher-producers with the 13 steps involved in program production on Cincinnati's educational television station, WCET. Effectively done, the manual contains concise, yet helpful, hints for teacher-producers from initial planning to the finished presentation.

• WCET, The Greater Cincinnati Television Educational Foundation. *In School Study Manual.* Cincinnati, O.: WCET.

This manual is compiled and edited three times a year by the In-School Service Group and provides a useful guide to the educational television programs produced during the period. Information about each program—including purposes, participants, content, and time—is included. The WCET Program Schedule indicates rather extensive offerings of many different kinds. The teacher —the key person in capitalizing on every television program—will welcome the guide to program viewing, which proposes additional follow-up activities.

• KSLM. St. Louis Board of Education Station. *Let's Find Out, Just Why Stories, Know Yourself, Distant Lands, Polly and Putty, Creative Writing, Check and Doublecheck, Cantemos, Voici Mimi.* St. Louis, Mo.: the St. Louis Public Schools, 1957.

These titles are just a few of the more than two dozen brief guides (six to 19 pages long) produced for use with the FM radio station of the St. Louis Public Schools. They are tools for, first, informing teachers of educational radio programs and, second, transforming radio ideas into classroom practices. General suggestions complement the specific activities for pre- and post-broadcast for each of the programs in a particular series. The broadcast series are for varied grade levels from kindergarten through high school in almost all the subject areas.

• St. Louis Educational Television Commission. *School Programs Study Guide, Fall 1957.* St. Louis, Mo.: the Commission, 1957. 118 p. $.50.

Here, as in the WCET guide, educational television is seen as a major medium of learning: "Television programs are not ends in themselves, nor may they be the most important element in the total learning process that occurs in the classroom. This guide describes each of the series presented and for each lesson the purposes, concepts, and activities are listed. Study guides with even more detail for planning are available for each of the program series.

• Springfield Public Schools. *Developmental Reading.* Springfield, Mo.: the Schools, 1957. 73 p.

With some changes and additions, this bulletin is a revision of one which appeared in 1954. Instructional guidelines supplement the developmental reading program, directed reading experiences in the content areas, and experiences for personal and recreational purposes. Strongest sections are those which deal with differentiation of instruction and with directed reading. The chapter on evaluation is divided into a section on self-evaluation for the teacher and another on evaluating pupil progress. The bibliography has been updated.

Curriculum Research

Column Editor: Alexander Frazier
Contributor: Ruth M. Larson [1]

Can We Build Better Curriculum Theory?

THE possibilities of building better curriculum theory will be more accessible when we learn more about theory-building. We need to become more astute about our own modes of thinking. This will involve (a) asking fundamental questions that can free us from unnecessary bondage to certain assumptions; (b) setting up criteria and procedures for theory-building in our field; and (c) preparing specialists for such work and providing them with the means to do it.

Fortunately, this is not an utterly new undertaking. We have much to learn from other fields, especially from the physical sciences where theory has been developed successfully and from the philosophy of science where theory-building has received considerable attention in recent years. But our success lies not in thoughtlessly imitating the more successful. We have our own questions and necessities which provide us with special vantage points for theory-building. It is important to look for stimuli for fresh thinking about curriculum problems, rather than patterns to follow. The purpose of this article is to suggest some stimuli and to illustrate their usefulness.

One of the most remarkable feats in the history of the physical sciences was Copernicus' claim that the earth moved around the sun. This was contrary to the daily seeing of all humanity! Yet, the man could depart from traditional ways of thinking about geocentrism. Burtt comments about this as follows:

> . . . to Copernicus' mind the question was not one of truth or falsity, not, does the earth move? He simply included the earth in the question which Ptolemy had asked with reference to the celestial bodies alone . . . [2]

You see what happened? Copernicus departed from some basic assumptions and, thus, reinterpreted the data of his experience in order to deal with a hard question.

This point of view and way of thinking can help in dealing with hard questions in the curriculum field. Consider, for example, the why's and wherefore's concerning the gap between theory and practice. It is commonly assumed that theory is ahead and practice somewhere behind. There is something wrong with this assumption. First, it emphasizes the improvement of practice and leaves out theory *per se* as a factor that could be improved, too. Second, assuming that there are common elements in the teaching-learning process at all levels, it presents an embarrassing paradox. On the one hand, it is claimed that if teachers follow the recommended theory, then their teaching will be significantly more effective. On the other hand, the assumption admits that we do not know how to teach teachers to teach more effectively. Even with the rejection of this paradox,

[1] Acknowledgment is made to Clifford Bebell whose encouragement and suggestions helped in the development of this article.

[2] E. A. Burtt, *The Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Science*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1954. p. 50-51.

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one must still deal with the questions that it suggests; for example, is theory ahead of practice at all levels and in all areas of curriculum work? Does the individual who assumes that theory is ahead of practice grasp its implications for his own ways of thinking and working? These questions suggest a third weakness in the assumption. It obscures ambiguities in the words, "theory" and "practice," and, also, obscures questions about their relations. Is theory merely speculation or a set of directives derived from a particular ideology or a system of definitions and operating principles developed according to the rules of science and logic? Does practice include the performance of any tasks having to do with curriculum problems at any level and in any area? Are there significant differences in the functions of each kind of theory in the performance of various tasks? These questions suggest fresh ways of looking at old problems. As did Copernicus, let us dismiss unnecessary assumptions and look for ways of reinterpreting the gap between theory and practice.

Karl Mannheim, writing about problems in developing scientific politics, made the following assertion:

> If we seek a science of that which is in process of becoming, of practice and for practice, we can realize it only by discovering a new framework in which this kind of knowledge can find adequate expression.[3]

This makes sense in the curriculum field where the units of analysis from the so-called basic disciplines just do not fit together to provide a workable system of theory for interpreting our data. The socio-cultural milieu plus human relations plus growth and development plus personality factors plus a theory of learning plus curriculum objectives plus subject matter plus a few other things add up to indigestible hash, theoretically speaking. Theory-builders need to start with curriculum problems, both operational and theoretical, and develop a rationale appropriate to them. One of the inadequacies of action research lies in this lack of rationale, and practitioners have neither the know-how nor the time to build theory along with everything else. We may discover that it would be quite practical to consign theory-builders to ivory towers. Becoming more astute about theoretical problems in our field could produce a dialectic between action and theory from which would emerge new structures of knowledge about curriculum work. And curriculum research would be instrumental to such transformation.

Now let us look at some other ideas which may help in understanding what theory-building entails. In "Foundations of Physics" Frank writes:

> Speaking exactly, we have to remember that experiments confirm a system which consists not only of two but of three kinds of statements: equations, plus operational definitions, plus logical and mathematical rules.[4]

Notice the difference in what is being added here and the list of terms with plus signs in between them in the previous paragraph. Does this suggest some keys to better curriculum theory? One is that the development of theory depends upon its structure as well as its content. Structure includes such things as principles for verifying hypotheses, rules involved in the formulation of definitions and hypotheses, criteria for ascertaining the validity and reliability of one's procedures, and mathematical models that

[3] Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia.* (A Harvest Book) New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., n.d. p. 171.

[4] Philipp Frank, "Foundations of Physics." *International Encyclopedia of Unified Sciences, Vol. I, No. 7.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952. p. 4.

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can provide "deductoscopes" for seeing further into curriculum pro'lems. The most serious barriers to the development of such useful structures lie in our meager knowledge of science, mathematics and logic and, also, in accompanying negative attitudes toward them. They are not "givens" to which to acquiesce. They are not necessarily inadequate for providing structures for thinking about curriculum problems. We need specialists who are equipped to be inventive —who can look for relevancies that already exist and explore the possibilities of new developments, especially in mathematics and logic, that will contribute to the structure of better curriculum theory.

Another key to better theory in the preceding quote lies in the centrality of operational definitions and principles. Operational concepts are not new in the curriculum field. But there is a long distance to go before they are filled with meanings that contribute to better theory. There is too much space between our "what's" and our "how's." Teachers are saying this when they state that theory is irrelevant to their work. For example, curriculum objectives are defined in terms of student behaviors, but how can teachers operate in order to achieve such? Is it not important to define objectives in terms of student-teacher behaviors? Or, to consider another aspect of the matter, it is important for teachers to understand children, but even more important for them to understand themselves in relation to their pupils. The old slogan, "Helping teachers understand children," should be replaced with "Helping teachers understand teaching." Here, you see, we are back to the matter of what units of analysis to use and, also, to the paradox previously mentioned. One thing is cer-

tain. The operations of the teacher (or other practitioner) must be central in our theory. Action research has strength because its method provides means for putting the "what's" and "how's" into functional relations. But to leave the development of curriculum theory on the doorstep of any and every practitioner assumes unnecessarily piecemeal products. We must be reminded again and again that operational definitions and principles are not enough.

To summarize this point, here is a statement of it by Hempel:

In the contemporary methodological literature of psychology and the social sciences, the need for "operational definitions" is often emphasized to the neglect of the requirement of systematic import, and occasionally the impression is given that the most promising way of furthering the growth of sociology as a scientific discipline is to create a large supply of "operationally defined" terms of high determinacy and uniformity of usage, leaving it to subsequent research to discover whether these terms lend themselves to the formulation of fruitful theoretical principles. But concept formation in science cannot be separated from theoretical considerations; indeed, it is precisely the discovery of concept systems with theoretical import which advances scientific understanding; and such discovery requires scientific inventiveness and cannot be replaced by the—certainly indispensable but also definitely insufficient—operationist or empiricist requirement of empirical import alone.[5]

In conclusion, the following major points have been made:

(a) In the curriculum field we need to become more astute about our own modes of thinking;

(b) Theoretical developments in the physical sciences and in the philosophy

[5] Carl G. Hempel, "Fundamentals of Concept Formation in Empirical Science," *International Encyclopedia of Unified Sciences, Vol. II, No. 7.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952. p. 47.

(Continued on page 396)

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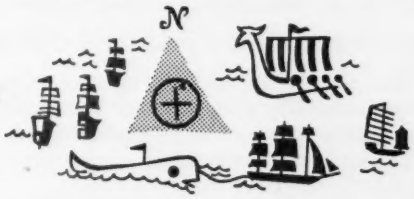

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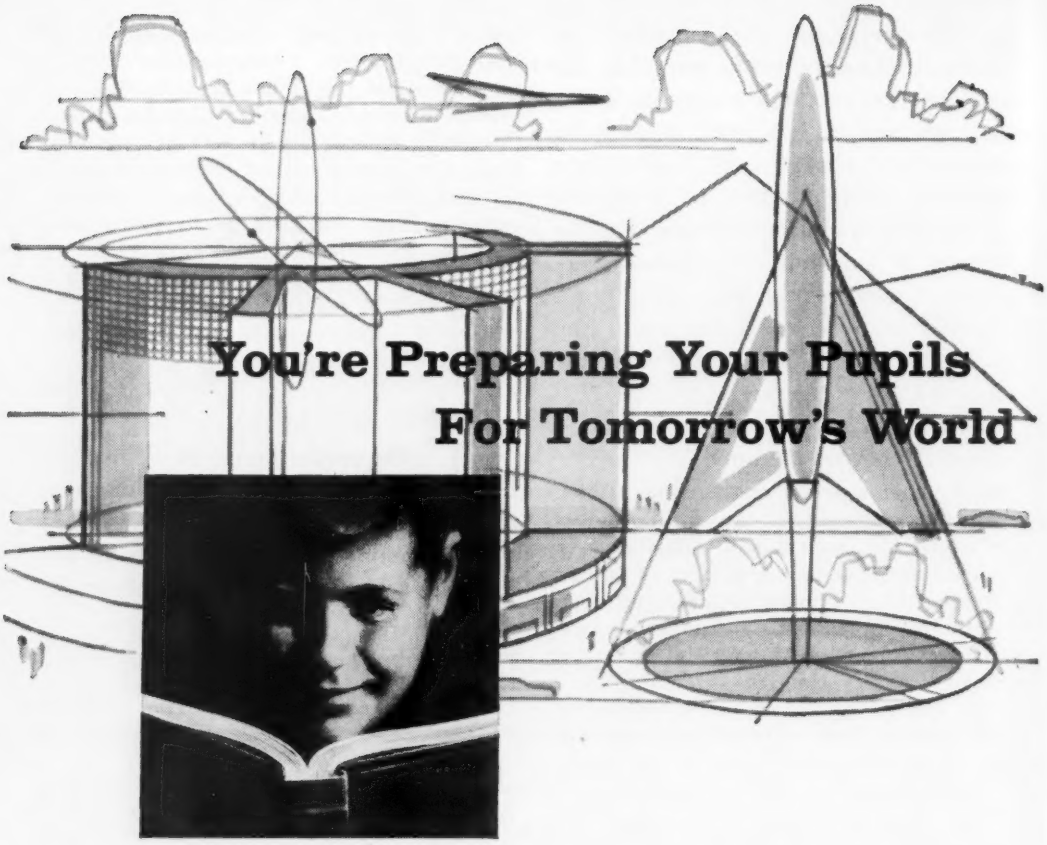

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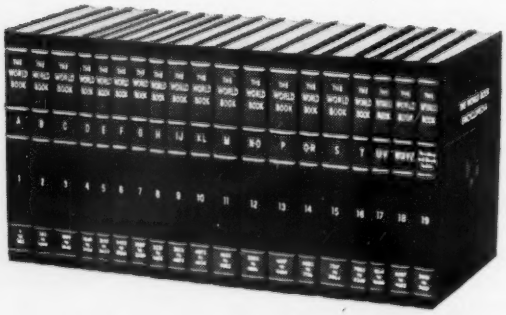

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Curriculum News

Column Editor: Robert S. Harnack
School of Education
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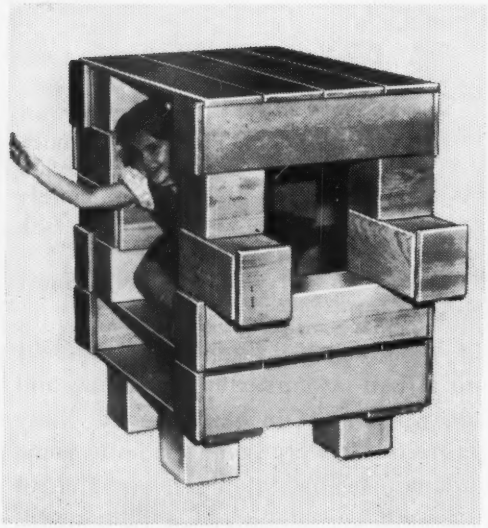
• Keynoting the annual conference of the Michigan Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, EDITH SAMPSON, former alternate delegate to the United Nations, emphasized the need for greater interpersonal understanding between peoples and nations that will be necessary for the World of Tomorrow. The conference pointed out that with the advent of the "Satellite Age" it became extremely important that the classroom teacher be aware of understandings basic to international education. Tremendously important in the vital educational picture is the curriculum aspect. G. ROBERT KOOPMAN, president of the national Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, stated that ". . . every teacher in every classroom should be 'making' the curriculum for youngsters in the classroom."

Attended by more than 400 key curriculum people, the conference emphasized the role of education in relation to changing sociological conditions and changing world conditions. Workshop sessions were conducted in 12 areas that had a direct relationship to vitalizing a "Curriculum for Citizens of the 21st Century." In light of Soviet accomplishments, there was agreement that the place of science in curriculum was of essential importance. It was pointed out, too, that understanding and progress in such phases of education as modern languages, foreign relations and policy, religion and ethics are extremely vital to the over-all picture of living in Tomorrow's World.

• What effect, if any, have Sputniks I and II had on curriculum planning and improvement? Obviously, many hasty generalizations are being made. In some instances an intelligent re-evaluation of American education will be the result. *EDPRESS News Letter* in the November 22 issue reports that the launching of the Russian satellites has caused deep concern among University of Michigan faculty members. As researchers, they recognize the quality and short-range challenge of the Russian accomplishments; as educators, they are concerned with the long-range implications. While university faculty members have been impressed by the Russian advances, they are not panicked by them. There is wide agreement that if this nation moves wisely and promptly, it can keep pace with or exceed the Russians. There is also general agreement on two points: (a) In its haste to catch up with the Russians in the missiles field, this nation must not hamstring its long-range educational programs. In fact, it is imperative that these be accelerated. (b) Major reforms are needed in the field of education, both in the manner of training our youth and in the public's attitude toward, and support of, education.

• Until recently, published translations of a portion of the world's great literature have been unavailable because of lack of translators of certain lan-



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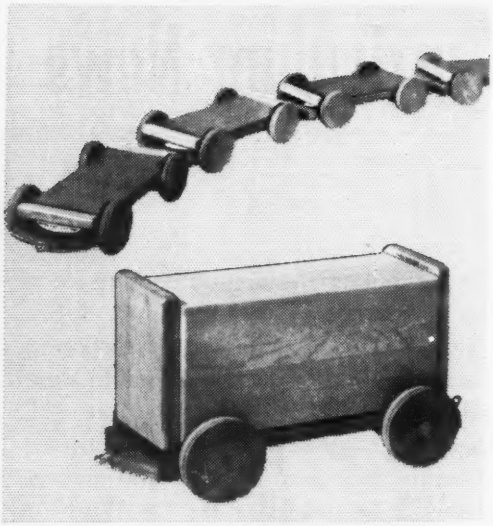

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guages, and publishers' fear of financial loss due to high publication costs. Books written in Arabic, Norwegian, Urdu, Punjabi, Thai, Korean, or Portuguese were seldom, if ever, published in England, the United States, France or Germany. And obversely, western classics translated into these languages have been generally unavailable. Now, for the first time, according to reports from *Looking Ahead,* November report of the National Planning Association, English-speaking peoples will be able to read, for example, the sacred writings of the Sikhs translated from Punjabi, books of philosophy translated from Arabic, representative novels translated from Spanish and Japanese, historical essays translated from Persian, and other literary works of other lands and cultures. The extensive UNESCO project known as the "Translation of Representative Works Programme" is bringing national literature to an international audience. The project has already translated Western classics like *Don Quixote* into Arabic, and Arabic classics into French and English. Spanish and Portuguese classics have been translated into French, and with the help of the Organization of American States, into English. For example, the UNESCO translation of the classic *Martin Fierro* poem will introduce Martin Fierro, the adventuresome Argentine gaucho, to a French audience. The Persian historical essay, *The History of the World Conqueror* by Juvaini, is now being translated into Western languages. In 1956 classics from little-known linguistic regions of the U.S.S.R. were brought to the Western world, as well as anthologies of the written and oral literatures of Africa. The translation of contemporary works, the project's most recent undertaking, includes seven series. One series each is being translated from Dutch, Greek, Japanese, Norwegian, and Persian into French, and one each from Japanese and Swedish into English. One Turkish book and five in various Asian languages are expected to be chosen for translation during the next two years.

• Philadelphia Public Schools teachers took part in a great variety of programs during the Seventh Annual Curriculum Conference as some 8,000 of them met in 50 groups in 40 school buildings. Programs included addresses, discussions, exhibitions, demonstration lessons, workshops, clinics. Some groups, such as the teachers of vocational education, science, and commercial education, visited community centers related to their particular fields. Besides local leaders, representatives of the Pennsylvania Department of Public Instruction, and leaders of national prominence met with certain groups. Elizabeth Healy Ross, assistant chief, U.S. Children's Bureau, and Howard Fehr, Teachers College, Columbia University, were among the speakers. A television program at 9:45 a.m. informed the general public about the conference. Martha A. Gable, director of the Division of Radio and Television Education, acted as moderator. Superintendent Allen H. Wetter, associate superintendent David A. Horowitz, and Mrs. Leon N. Prince, president of the Philadelphia Home and School Council, participated. The conference meetings had been organized by the district superintendents, with the Curriculum Office, headed by Associate Superintendent Helen C. Bailey, giving general direction, assisted by a guiding committee headed by John B. Taulane, superintendent of District 5.

• A subcommittee on Television and Teacher Education of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education has been releasing some interest-

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ing bulletins during the past few months. The latest received reports the failure of member institutions to give students and teachers-in-service proper instruction for effective utilization of commercial broadcast television programs. They emphasize that at a time when every practical resource is being utilized to increase the effectiveness of our teachers, teacher education institutions would seem to be remiss if they do not include, on a systematic and definitely scheduled basis, instruction which will enable teachers to take advantage of many excellent commercial programs to enrich and supplement the regular instruction in the classroom. Yet, in spite of all this, only slightly over half (57%) of the respondents reported that their curricula included information and instruction which would equip a teacher to utilize commercial television programs for the benefit of his pupils. These and related findings show clearly the need for a careful study to determine how the competencies of a teacher can be developed to include an ability to make the wisest possible use of commercial television programs.

• What can be done to strengthen the bridge between secondary school and college? NASSP *Spotlight* asks and answers this question in its November-December issue. Some of the points mentioned which have significance for curriculum workers are: (a) Stress the need for truly cooperative relations between schools and colleges at state levels through a state-wide school and college committee. (b) Speak up more confidently and frankly to college admissions officers. Inform them of your considered position in regard to entrance procedures. Your clientele—students and parents—regard you as a spokesman, and your responsibility cannot be avoided. (c) Provide the student with adequate, dependable information on his own strengths and weaknesses interpreted in terms of his educational and vocational goals. (d) Know the students well enough to supply the college with a legible, understandable, accurate transcript of the student's scholastic, test, and activities records, and a statement on his personal characteristics. (e) Concentrate on developing the skills that will be useful to pupils in college and life—ability to read well, to write well, to use the library, to study effectively, to listen carefully, to organize ideas, to carry out long-term assignments without constant supervision. Mainly, help students to improve their ability to read, write and study. (f) Discuss with your staff how your school can offer advanced credit courses to qualified students so that they may enter college with advanced placement in some subject areas.

• Thousands of high school classrooms (and a hundred or more junior colleges, colleges and universities) across the nation will devote from one to five periods a week, for eight weeks beginning February 2, 1958, to "Great Decisions . . . 1958"—the eight most critical international relations questions facing the American government and people. This activity is a result of experiments by social studies teachers in 12 states this past year with the "Great Decisions" program offered by the Foreign Policy Association, a private, nonpartisan, educational organization now in its fortieth year. Students of high school age, they discovered, can think their way through major issues of U.S. foreign policy with the help of problem-solving classroom materials. Students' learning situations were multiplied in scores of cities and towns where the "Great Decisions" program was a community-wide effort.

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(Continued from page 362)

on the science table, all these seem nearly impossible when you cannot work in your own room because it is always occupied. And for children, it is hard to share when you have never had anything that is your own!

So, although we work together to solve what we can, quite clearly, intelligent, dedicated, professionally minded teachers can only accomplish so much, no matter how much participation occurs in the solving of double session problems. Such teacher participation has many values whether schools work on single, double or triple shifts. Perhaps its greatest value can be that the continuing crises of zooming school population may force a degree of democratization upon schools which might not otherwise occur. But lasting solution to such problems is beyond the confines of the school building and of the professional realm in which teachers must actively participate. Only through action by the wider community, by all of the people, can adequate means be provided to achieve and maintain the kind of schools we need for the children we teach.

(Continued from page 389)

of science contain valuable stimuli for fresh thinking about curriculum problems; and

(c) Specialists in curriculum theory could help by developing a rationale for both theoretical and operational problems in the field.

Underlying these major points is the idea that scientific concepts and methods can provide the bases for thinking about curriculum problems. This is an hypothesis rather than an assumption. As an hypothesis, the idea can lead to significant questions. As an assumption it will lead only to trite and insignificant controversies. There is too much at stake for us to be content with the latter.

—Ruth M. Larson, *research assistant and instructor, Ohio Wesleyan University, Delaware, Ohio.*

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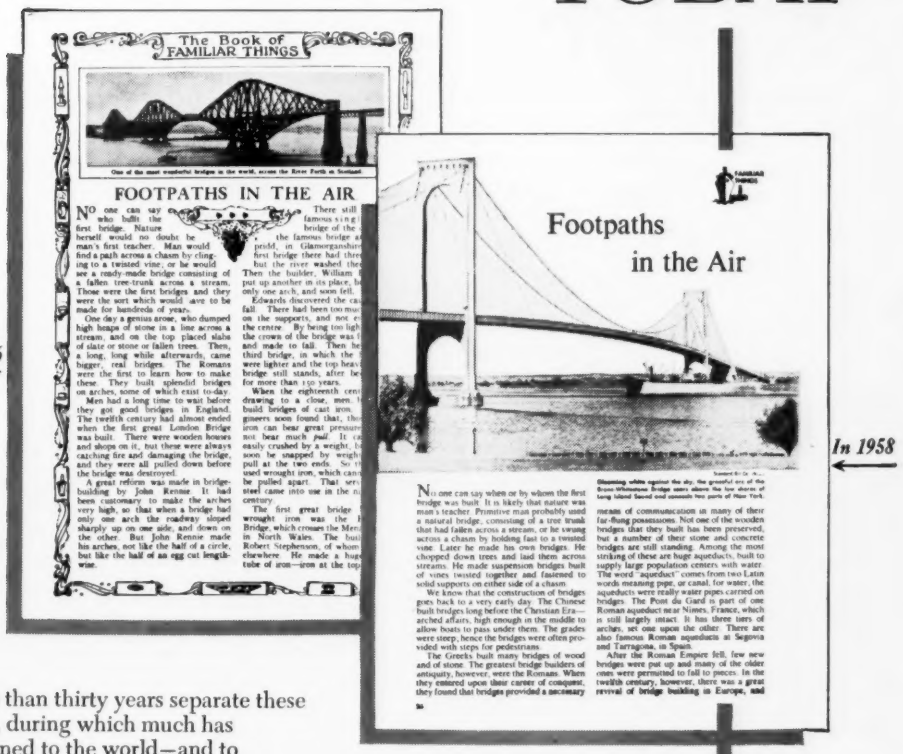

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